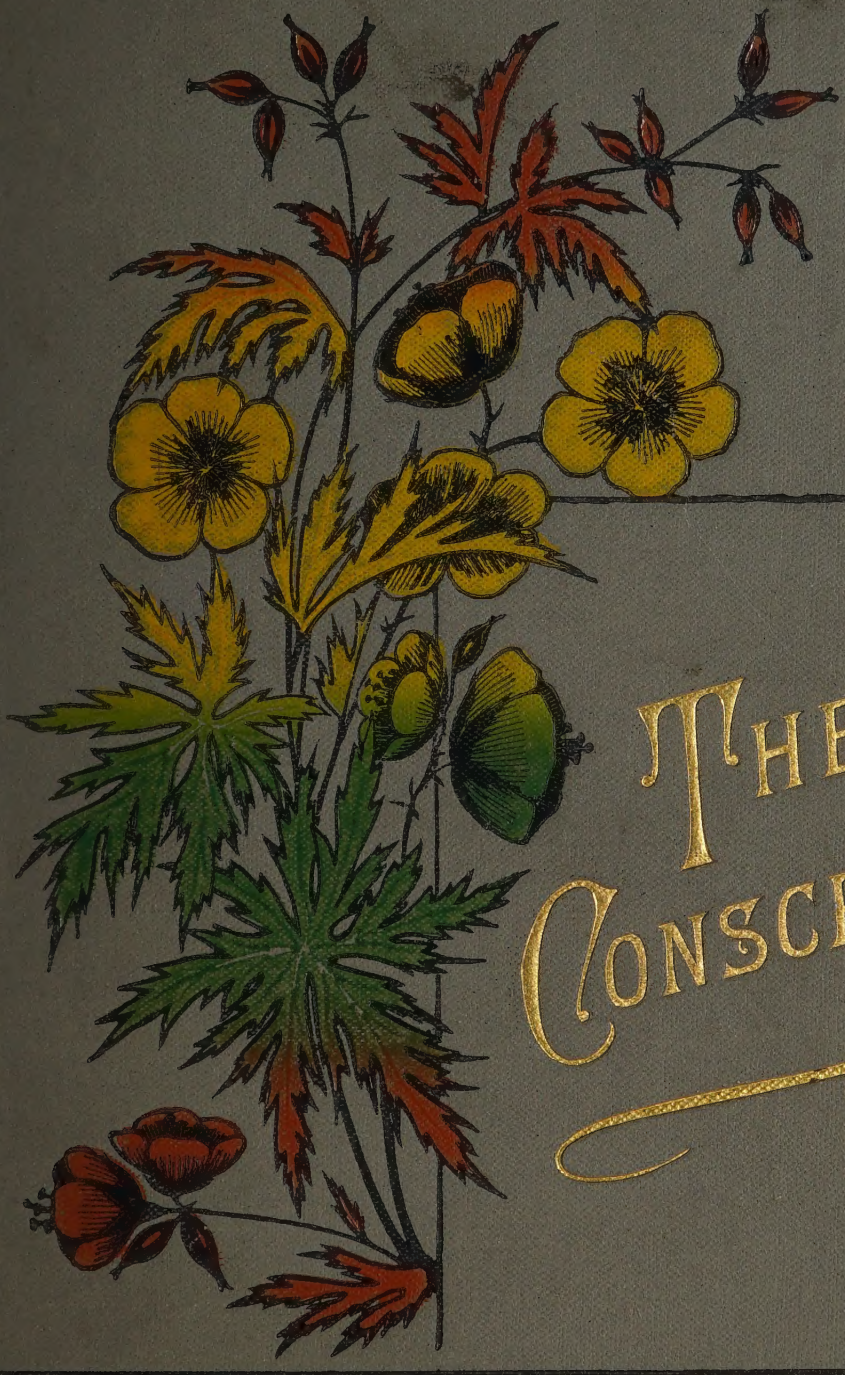
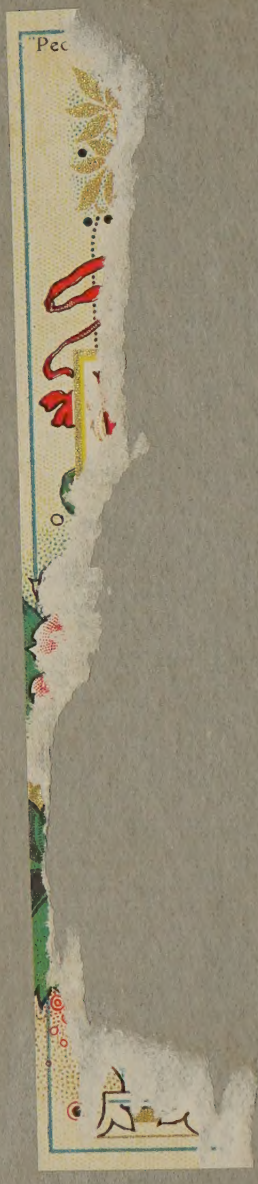


# The Conscript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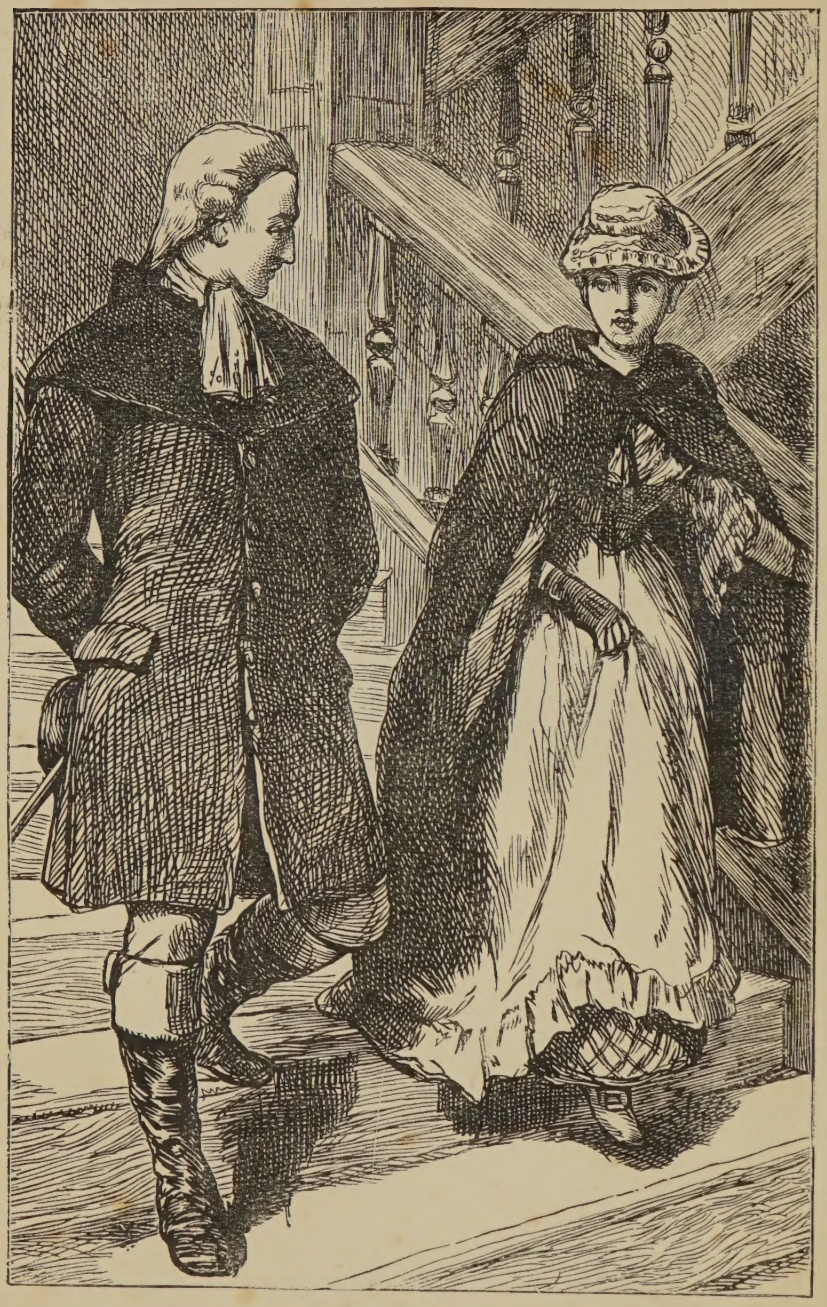
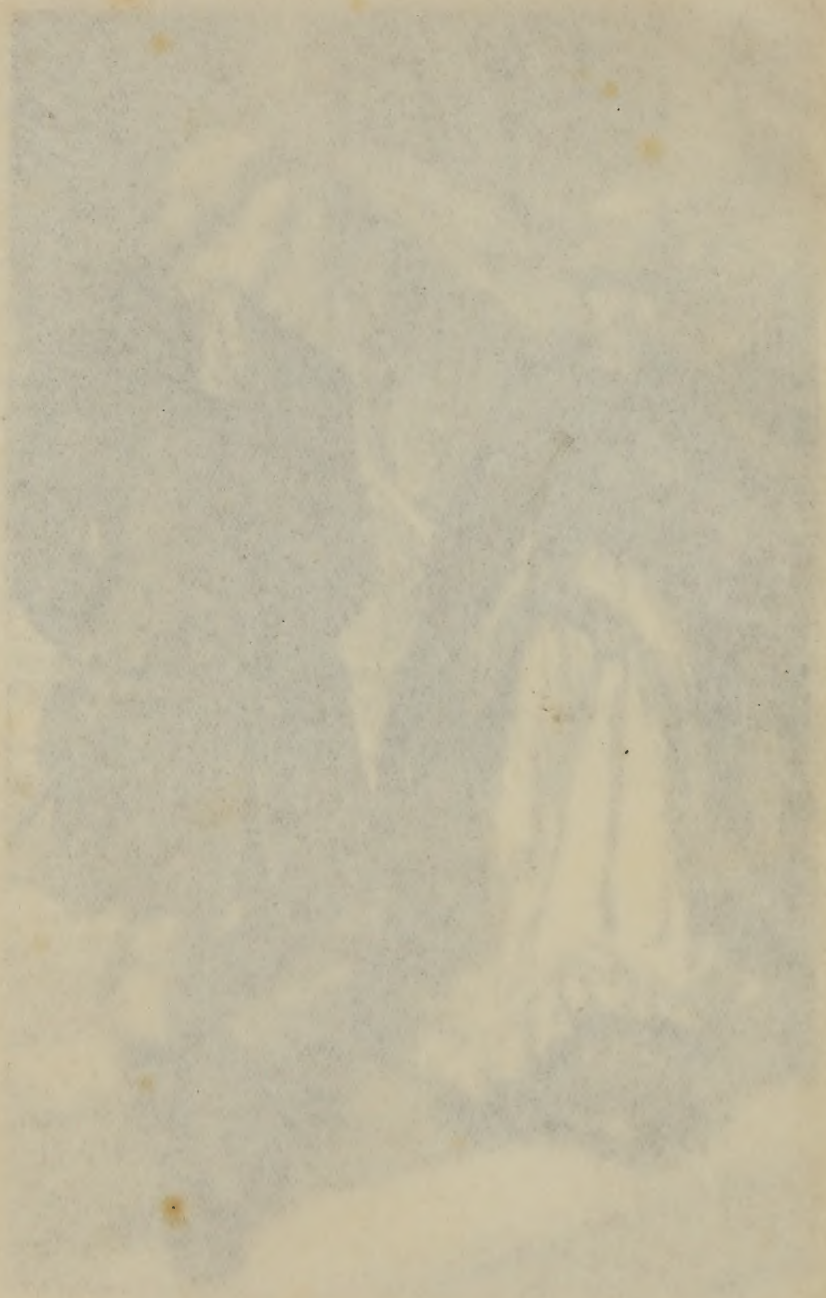


ERNEST AND LOUISE DE LAVIGNE.

# THE CONSCRIPT

AND OTHER TALES

W. & R. CHAMBERS, LIMITED
LONDON AND EDINBURGH



# THE CONSCRIPT

## AND OTHER TALES

W. & R. CHAMBERS, LIMITED
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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# THE CONSCRIPT.

IN a narrow street of a poor suburb of Paris there stood, many years ago, a small and obscure fruiterer's shop, where a few withered cabbages and some stale fruit placed at the door made a melancholy show; whilst on the shelves within were symmetrically arranged baskets, which, though complaisantly supposed by customers to contain something, were, in reality, quite empty.

'Mathieu Giraud, Fruitier,' was written in large and half-effaced letters above the door of this humble abode. There was no one in the shop; but in a small back-room beyond it two women were seated. They spoke but little, and busily plied their needles, though one of them occasionally glanced towards the shop, as if expecting some customer to enter; but the precaution was needless: it remained vacant; and at every glance the woman sighed, and once more resumed her work. The back-room was small, and almost bare. A dingy bed half-hidden in a recess, a table, and a few chairs of painted deal, were all the furniture it contained. It was dark, moreover, as all back-rooms have been from time immemorial, and

the dull glimmering light which streamed from the high narrow window appeared to increase rather than diminish the natural gloom of the place. The two women were seated near the light, which fell full upon them. They were both somewhat advanced in years; and their pale and wrinkled features bespoke a life of poverty and care. They were sisters, but notwithstanding their relationship, very different in temper and personal appearance. Antoinette Giraud, the fruiterer's wife, was tall and thin, a simple, meek-looking woman, long accustomed to misfortune, to which she had at length submitted with a kind of indifference, proceeding more from a broken spirit than from resignation. Ma tante Anne, or Aunt Anne, the name under which her sister was generally known, was, on the contrary, a brisk little creature, full of spirit and fire, with many mysterious winks, and nods, and prophetic hints, which it was not given to everybody to understand. She was a firm believer in dreams, and held cards, as a means of divination, in great reverence: indeed she trusted to them, and her nightly visions, in almost every important occurrence of her life; and notwithstanding her repeated failures, held her faith in them unchanged. It might, indeed, have been supposed that Anne lived for the mere purpose of dreaming. As she had never been married—her unlucky dreams having, she said, always come in the way just as she was on the point of contracting a matrimonial engagement—she had for many years resided with her sister Antoinette; thus, however, escaping only a few of the cares of matrimony. The two females had been for some time sewing in silence, when Antoinette, pausing in her work, suddenly observed in a melancholy tone: 'No, no, I have no hope, Anne; my poor Jean will not get a good number. His father and I have always been unlucky, and we shall be

so to the end.' And the old woman shook her head despondingly.

'Ha! Antoinette,' replied Anne with mysterious solemnity, 'if Jean had only listened to me he would have consulted Mademoiselle Lenormand before she died, and then we should have known what number he was to get, and whether he was to be a soldier or not. But no; he always said it was throwing away money. Young people don't believe in anything nowadays.' And Anne shook her gray head even more sadly than her sister.

'If I were only dead, they could not take Jean from you,' said a low broken voice, which proceeded from the bed in the recess.

'Did you speak, Mathieu?' inquired Antoinette, going up to the couch of her paralysed husband.

'Ay, ay,' he muttered, without making a direct reply, 'Heaven help us; our poor Jean has no chance.'

'Ay, he has no chance,' sadly repeated his wife, resuming her seat.

Mathieu and Antoinette Giraud had been married for many years, and had begun their wedded life with every prospect of happiness. In one sense they had indeed been perfectly happy; but so far as worldly matters were concerned, they had had to endure all the trials of poverty and misfortune combined. After struggling for some time against the difficulties which surrounded them, they had at last been obliged to give in, and leave their neat and comfortable fruiterer's shop in the Rue St Honoré for one in the suburbs of the city. Scarcely had they removed to their new lodgings, when Mathieu became paralysed. This unhappy event cast upon his wife the sole burden of attending to the shop and supporting the family. To this task, notwithstanding her strenuous efforts, Antoinette would have proved wholly inefficient,

but for the aid she received from her only son, then a youth of fifteen. Jean Giraud was scarcely out of his apprenticeship, though he had the heart and courage of a man; he was a locksmith by trade, but, on account of his youth, did not earn, with all his industry, more than a few francs a week. On this scanty sum, and the little that Antoinette and Anne made by their sales in the shop, and their exertions in the shape of needlework, the whole family contrived to live: no easy task, considering that old Mathieu's illness was very expensive. Still, they did live, and, as Antoinette often proudly observed, 'without owing a single sous to anybody.'

The French working-classes have, generally speaking, a deep and wholesome horror of debt.

As Jean grew older, his earnings increased, and some comfort began to reign in the little family. A few hundred francs even went to the savings-bank; but this was only a provision for the approaching time when Jean would probably be snatched from his parents to enter the army, according to the laws of the French conscription. The fated epoch had now arrived: Jean was twenty-one; and on the next day he was, with the other youths of the neighbourhood, to proceed to the mairie; and there, in the presence of the mayor, to draw forth from an urn a roll of paper on which a number was inscribed. If the number was a low one, such as 12, 25, or even 40 or 50, Jean Giraud must bid his parents farewell, and become a soldier; but if it was a high one, as, for instance, 80, 90, or 100, there was little or no chance of his being ever called upon to fight for his country, and he might quietly remain at home. Had he, moreover, been a widow's son, or afflicted with any awkward deformity, this would have sufficed, whatever number he drew, to exclude him from the service. This was why Mathieu,

regretting his own useless life, observed, with a groan, that his poor Jean had no chance; whilst Antoinette, thinking of her son's muscular and well-knit frame, echoed with a sigh: 'Ay, he has no chance.'

A melancholy silence had followed these last words, and Antoinette was in the shop attending on a customer, when Ma tante Anne mysteriously drew a pack of cards from her pocket, and muttering to herself, began dealing them out, and spreading them on the table before her. For some time she eyed the cards with apparent satisfaction.

'All goes on well, Antoinette,' she eagerly said, addressing her sister, who now came in from the shop: 'just look: here is an ace of diamonds, which signifies good news; then here are plenty of clubs, which mean money; and now see if the card I am going to turn up is not a good one?'

As she spoke she laid the ace of spades upon the table. 'Oh!' she cried in consternation, 'the ace of spades! Why, I can have no hope after this! But 'tis all of a piece. I dreamed of a rat last night. Ah! poor Jean, all is ruined; the ace of spades!' and she rocked herself in her chair with every token of despair.

'What! has anything happened to Jean?' inquired a low and tremulous voice behind.

Anne and Antoinette both turned round somewhat hastily; but more, however, to greet the new-comer than to testify their surprise at her unexpected appearance.

She who thus anxiously inquired after Jean was a pretty brunette, about eighteen, with glossy black hair smoothed under her little white cap, and very brilliant dark eyes. Her dress, though remarkably plain and simple, had that indescribable air of neatness which

characterises the better class of the Parisian grisettes, and added even a new charm to her attractive little person. Marie, for such was the name of the pretty grisette, was a *giletière*, or waistcoat-maker, and being an excellent work-woman, sometimes earned no contemptible sum by her industry. She resided in the same house with the Girauds, and, if the truth must be told, had for the last six months been betrothed to Jean, whose parents loved her almost as tenderly as the young man himself. Marie of course took great interest in the question of Jean's coming fate, as the two lovers had agreed to postpone their marriage until all was over. If he was so fortunate as to draw a good number, the wedding was to take place in less than a twelvemonth ; if, on the contrary, he became a soldier, Jean and Marie would have to wait eight years for the fulfilment of their happiness.

Marie's spirits were not cast down by this alternative. She was an orphan, and had been early taught self-reliance and trust in Providence. Hope had indeed become so habitual to her, that she would have indulged in it even under desperate circumstances. In this disposition she was upheld not only by the buoyancy of youth, but also by her natural good sense, which led her to contemplate even misfortune under its most advantageous aspect. Besides, as she sometimes philosophically observed, 'God was for all ; for both rich and poor.' It must, however, be confessed that, notwithstanding her philosophy, Marie felt no little anxiety to know the result of Jean's trial on the next day. Eight years were a long period to pass without perhaps seeing him more than once or twice. And even less selfish considerations led her to fear this result when she reflected on the unhappy condition to which his absence would reduce his parents. As she entered the back-room on this evening, and heard Aunt

Anne mention the name of her betrothed in a tone of despair, Marie, therefore, felt some uneasiness; and receiving no reply to her first question, she anxiously repeated: 'Has anything happened to Jean?'

'No, Marie,' sadly replied Antoinette; ''tis only the old story: to-morrow is the day.'

'Ay, to-morrow is the day,' sorrowfully echoed Anne; 'and depend upon it poor Jean will go. I did not turn up an ace of spades, or dream of a rat, for nothing.'

'Oh! is that all?' said Marie somewhat relieved: 'he has still a chance, I hope.'

'A chance!' doubtfully answered Antoinette; 'have we not always been unlucky? No, no, we have no chance. If even Jean was lame, or wanted a few teeth, or'——

'Well,' interrupted Marie, laughing in spite of her real grief, 'I am not sorry, for my part, that he is not exactly as you would wish him to be. But,' added she more gravely, 'you must not get into low spirits, Madame Giraud; though you have not been very happy as yet, it is true, still a day comes at last for the poor as well as for the rich.'

Here Mathieu sighed audibly, and Marie approached the old man's bed.

'How are you this evening, Monsieur Giraud?' said she gently.

Mathieu gazed on her tenderly, but made no reply. He had known and loved Marie for years; for when he first fell ill, his wife and sister-in-law being sometimes compelled to leave him alone, the young waistcoat-maker would then come and sit by his bed-side with her work, cheering him with her pleasant laugh and merry song. It is indeed quite characteristic of the grisette that she always sings, and she has even prettily and poetically been

called 'the lark of Paris.' Never, surely, was there a merrier lark than Marie. From staying occasionally near the old man, she at last came to spend with him a few hours every day; this was mostly in the evening time, when Jean came home from work. The young man would then sit at the head of his father's bed, whilst Marie was working at the foot. It was thus their courtship began, to the great delight of old Mathieu, who was never happier than when he could thus see them together, and who now dwelt with bitter grief on their approaching separation.

'If I were dead,' said he, mournfully gazing upon her, 'you could be his wife.'

Marie's eyes filled with tears; but striving to hide her feelings, she observed with apparent cheerfulness: 'And why not whilst you are alive, Monsieur Giraud?'

'Because Jean will have a bad number,' replied the old man in the same desponding tone.

'Well, really,' exclaimed Marie with some impatience, 'you all seem quite determined that it should be so. Aunt Anne has turned up an ace of spades, and of course Jean must be a soldier; Madame Giraud says that she is poor and unlucky, and that there is no chance for him; and even you, Father Giraud,' she added in her most caressing yet reproachful tone—'even you must needs put in that, if you were dead, I should be his wife! Really this is too bad. I came here to seek for a little comfort, and not only find none for myself, but cannot even afford any. I suppose,' she pettishly continued, 'Jean will be as bad as the rest of you when he comes home.'

As she spoke thus, the door leading from the shop to the back-room opened, and Jean entered.

Jean Giraud was, indeed, as his mother had averred, not so fortunate as to be afflicted with any personal de-

formity. Far from it. He was tall, well-made, and good-looking ; and his curly chestnut hair, dark-blue eyes, and fresh colour, proclaimed him to belong to the real Frank race of his country. But on this evening a cloud sat on his usually open brow, and notwithstanding his efforts to conceal his feelings, the restless glance of his eye, and the occasional nervous twitching of his lips, betrayed his secret anxiety. Jean Giraud was as much of a hero as any of his countrymen ; he certainly was not of a timid disposition, and personal apprehensions had nothing to do with his present feelings. His only thoughts were for his parents. What were they to do when he was gone? Who was to support them in their present helpless condition? For Antoinette and her sister earned very little, and what the shop brought in was barely sufficient to pay the rent and taxes. Jean's mind brooded on these thoughts until he was well-nigh distracted. Though he loved Marie most tenderly, still it was not the prospect of parting from her that now saddened him : she was eighteen, and he twenty-one ; they were both young, and might wait even eight years and yet be happy. But his parents ! He strove to think no more of the subject, but in vain.

As he entered the back-room where the little family and his betrothed were seated together, Jean, however, endeavoured to assume something like cheerfulness. He whistled a tune with even more than usual glee, bade Marie good-evening with a merry joke, and sitting down at the head of the father's bed, declared he had never been so hungry for supper. Antoinette rose silently, and, assisted by Marie, began laying the things on the table. The supper was a frugal one, consisting merely of some bread, cheese, and wine. They all sat down to it in silence, Jean in vain endeavouring to appear cheerful, in

order to induce his mother and aunt to imitate his example. Scarcely was the meal over, when Antoinette, overcome by her feelings, burst into tears.

'Why, *maman*, what is the matter?' exclaimed her son with astonishment.

'Ah, Jean! what were you whistling?' she sorrowfully replied.

Jean started, for he had been humming the tune of the *Parisienne*, a favourite military song.

'Ay, ay,' said Anne mystically, shaking her head, ''tis only another token. I did not turn up the ace of spades for nothing.'

'Well, and let us suppose, after all, that he should get a bad number,' resolutely observed Marie; 'he will not die for it—nor shall we, I hope. I know what you are going to say, Jean,' she quickly added, noticing her betrothed's sorrowful look as it rested on his mother; 'but I feel very dull in my room up-stairs; what if, when you are gone, I should lodge here? Madame Giraud could take care of my money for me, and I am sure that would be a great relief; for though I do not earn much, still sometimes I don't know what to do with it, little as it is.'

'Marie!' exclaimed Jean in an agitated tone.

'I won't be interrupted,' peremptorily said his betrothed; 'besides, Monsieur Jean, this does not concern you, for it is all to be whilst you are away: your only business will be to write us such amusing letters as may make us laugh heartily.'

'And if he goes to Algeria?' observed his mother in a faltering tone.

'Well,' replied Marie with a faint attempt to smile, 'he will perhaps catch Abd-el-Kader, and become marshal of France.' But unable to control her emotion any

longer, she buried her face in her hands, and fairly burst into tears.

'Marie!' cried Jean reproachfully—but he also could get no further; and leaning his brow upon his hand, he looked very fixedly at the table.

'Well, well,' said Marie, after a brief though sad pause, 'all is not desperate yet. God is for the poor as well as for the rich, and perhaps he will leave us Jean.'

The next morning was as bright and fair a one as was ever seen in spring, and the sun shone quite merrily into Madame Giraud's shop, where, with Ma tante Anne, Antoinette was engaged in arranging everything, though the thoughts of both were certainly but little engrossed by their mutual occupation.

'Antoinette!' suddenly said Anne, 'do you know what I dreamed of last night?'

'No,' replied her sister, slightly starting; 'what was it about, Anne?'

'I dreamed that Jean had a black spot on his forehead.'

'Well, and what does that mean?'

'That means that he will have a bad number.'

'Heaven have mercy on us!' sorrowfully observed Antoinette; 'but perhaps, sister, you are mistaken?'

'Mistaken!' echoed Anne with undisguised wonder; 'would indeed I were; but you know, Antoinette, I was never mistaken yet in a dream; besides,' she muttered to herself, 'I shall try the cards by-and-by, and then we shall know all about it.'

'Hush!' said Antoinette, 'here is Jean; it is of no use to sadden the poor fellow.'

Jean indeed entered the shop dressed, and, as his poor mother declared, with a faint attempt to smile, quite spruce. Though not looking particularly merry, he did

not seem to be very sad ; he was calm and composed; for if he felt acutely, still his pride would not allow him to betray any unbecoming emotion in the presence of his comrades who were to accompany him to the mairie. After greeting his mother and aunt, Jean entered the back-room, and sat down by his father's bed-side. The old man was asleep, but he soon awoke ; and taking his son's hand between his own, gazed upon him with melancholy tenderness.

'Jean, my boy,' said he in a low tremulous voice, 'think of your poor father whilst you are away, and of your mother too ; perhaps you will never see them again. Ah ! this will be a sore blow to Antoinette,' he added in a mournful tone.

Jean rose, and walked about the room : all this was truly hard to bear.

He found it harder still when he sat down to breakfast between his mother and Marie, whose red eyes and pale cheeks testified that she had spent a sleepless night. The meal was a silent one, but it was nearly concluded when Anne entered the room. She was more than usually grave, and shook her head in a most prophetic and Sibyl-like manner. 'What is the matter, Anne?' tremulously inquired Antoinette.

'I have just been dealing out the cards in my room.'

'Well,' anxiously said the poor mother, 'what about Jean?'

'I have seen the number he is to get.'

'Ah ! which is it?' eagerly asked Madame Giraud.

'Jean will get number 27,' replied Anne solemnly.

'A bad number !' faintly echoed Antoinette.

'Maman,' almost angrily exclaimed Jean, 'can anything so foolish affect you thus?'

'Foolish !' cried Anne indignantly ; 'ha ! young people

don't believe in anything nowadays. I only grieve for you, Jean, that I am in the right; would indeed I were wrong, and that you were not to get that ugly number 27!'

Jean knew his aunt's obstinacy on this head, and, unwilling to irritate her uselessly, he dropped the subject.

When the breakfast was over—and a cheerless one it was—all arose, for it was time for Jean to depart. He first went to his father's bed-side. Old Mathieu caused himself to be raised on his couch, and in a low broken tone muttered a heartfelt benediction over his son, whilst the weeping Antoinette stood near him. From his parents Jean turned to Aunt Anne, who very affectionately embraced him, but muttered something at the same time about his unfortunate incredulity, and number 27. Marie alone seemed collected and calm, and though she was sad, a smile of hope played around her lips.

'Be of good cheer, Jean,' said she, giving him her hand; 'God is for us all, for the poor and the rich. Be of good cheer; should even the worst happen, we will strive to bear it patiently.'

Jean gazed affectionately on his betrothed, and once more embracing his weeping mother, precipitately left the house, not daring to trust himself with a look behind.

We will not endeavour to describe the hours of anxious expectation that followed—hours that actually seemed days, so slowly and tediously did they drag along. Antoinette, under pretence of seeing to the shop, was constantly looking in the street for Jean; whilst Anne every quarter of an hour went up-stairs to her room with a mysterious look, and came down again with a clouded brow and ominous glance. The infection seemed to have caught Marie herself; for though she sat with her work near Mathieu's bed, the old man sadly remarked that her

needle often flagged, and, for the first time since many days, that she had no merry song to cheer him. Then there were two or three old neighbours who occasionally peeped in and out with woe-begone features, holding mysterious conferences with Aunt Anne, and startling her poor sister by dismal tales of many a young and handsome conscript whom they had known, and who had fallen, poor fellow, in his first battle. In short, they were all as comfortably miserable as they could be, when Marie, unable to bear her impatience any longer, left her work, and going to the shop-door, looked out into the street. It was vacant, and no token of Jean was to be seen. With a sigh she once more entered the back-room; she had scarcely, however, reached the threshold, when she suddenly paused, and turned pale: a loud shout had echoed at the farthest end of the street.

'The conscripts!' said Antoinette in a low tone.

'So soon!' answered Marie with seeming indifference; 'don't you think it may be something else?'

'No, no,' replied Antoinette in a feverish voice; 'it is the conscripts; I hear their music.'

The merry sounds of a fiddle might, indeed, as she spoke, be heard at the end of the street. Supported by Marie, for she was nearly overcome with emotion, and followed by her sister, the poor mother proceeded to the front-door, whilst Mathieu prayed fervently in his bed.

When they looked out, the conscripts still stood somewhat far down in the street. Their hats were ornamented with tricoloured favours, and the number each had drawn, whether good or bad, was fixed in his hat-band, and visible even at a distance. But Antoinette and Marie vainly strove to distinguish Jean in the crowd.

'I see him!' at length cried Marie, turning pale.

'Ha! where is he? what is his number?' simultane-

ously exclaimed the two sisters, less clear-sighted than their young companion.

'There—there beyond: he looks round this way; but I can see nothing of his number.'

'Ay, ay, I see him now,' eagerly remarked Aunt Anne; 'and alas! poor boy, I can see his number too. Ah! I knew it—27!'

'It is not 27,' hastily observed Marie; 'for see, Aunt Anne, Jean holds up his hat for us to see it; the number begins with a one, and then there is a nought.'

'Ay, ten,' said Anne; 'worse still than 27: I knew it was a bad one.'

'No, it is not ten,' continued Marie in a tone tremulous with emotion; 'there is another nought—it is a hundred;' and falling down on a chair, she burst into tears, whilst Jean rushed into the shop, waving his hat with triumph.

We will not endeavour to describe the scene that followed—Old Mathieu's joy, Antoinette's silent rapture, and Marie's bright smiles. Aunt Anne, though greatly delighted, was very much surprised: both her dreams and cards had for once signally failed. As for the dream, it was, she averred, quite her own mistake, for evidently the spot on Jean's forehead meant nothing: it should have been on his hat, to prove at all significant! Then she had most probably misdealt the cards; such an error could never otherwise have happened—nay, she even recollected something about a hundred! Farther than this Aunt Anne would never yield when remonstrated with on this subject. It is, however, worthy of remark, that her faith in dreams and cards seemed rather shaken, as she henceforth indulged in much less speculation concerning them than she had formerly been in the habit of doing. As for the old neighbours, they were very much pleased, but not so much surprised; they were almost

certain all would turn out well, but had not said so, lest they should excite expectations that might be deceived. But to return to the conscript and his family.

The day was spent by them in much happiness; indeed there was almost too much of this quality in it. The event was so delightful, so unexpected, so everything that was pleasant, that Antoinette, Anne, Marie, and Jean were quite bewildered. Mathieu seemed alone a little sensible. Towards evening they had, however, grown calmer, and after supper, sat up to make plans for the future—the only apparent consequence of which was, their separating very late. When Marie at length rose to depart, and bent over Mathieu to bid him good-night, she could not resist the temptation of whispering to him: 'Well, Father Giraud, do you wish to die now?'

'No, Marie,' said he, gazing on her affectionately; 'no, not yet.'

'And you, Madame Giraud,' playfully said the young girl, turning towards Antoinette, 'don't you think we poor folks are sometimes as happy as the rich, if not a great deal more so?'

'Ay, and ten times as happy,' warmly replied Antoinette, who was now quite merry.

'No, not ten times,' smilingly observed Marie; 'for you know God watches over both rich and poor.'

The sequel need scarcely be told. In less than a year Jean and Marie were married, and old Mathieu, though still paralysed, declared himself so happy at the event, that he expressed his readiness to die; which has not, however, prevented him from living ever since, and repeating the same wish on the birth of his son's first child, which, being a girl, gave its parents no uneasiness on the subject of the conscription. Jean and Marie

have not grown very rich, but the shop has been newly painted, and, somehow or other, is oftener filled with customers than it used to be: it no longer contains any withered cabbages, and is so frequently visited by the children of the neighbourhood, that no fruit grows stale in it. Antoinette superintends the general concerns of the house, Anne has taken charge of the little Marie, whose horoscope she persists in formally drawing on every anniversary of her birthday. Jean attends to his work; and Marie, though she still contrives to earn a few francs with her waistcoats, attends to the shop, and, as old Mathieu declares, gladdens the whole place with her merry song. 'And yet,' as she often observes, 'how strange that all this happiness should have depended on one insignificant little number!'

It is true Marie generally closes this philosophical remark by quoting her favourite saying; but it is, we hope, too well impressed on the reader's mind to require repetition.

# THE BATH POST-BOY.

IT was in the early part of the last century—when the mail was transmitted from the principal towns of England in charge of a mounted postman, with holster-pistols and saddle-bags, and carried from the smaller ones by poor boys, who received a halfpenny a mile for serving the post-office in all weathers—that the postmaster of Bath informed all whom it might concern, by a printed bill in the window, that a smart active lad of fifteen or thereby was required to carry the mail between that town and Marlborough, at the above-mentioned rate of wages.

The road was long and rough; and three days had already passed, during which the mail was carried by the postmaster's own good boy, and man-of-all-work, much to his discomfort, and the manifest dissatisfaction of the good people of Marlborough, to whom their letters came several hours too late: but no candidate for the situation had yet presented himself. At length, on the fourth morning, which was that of a sultry July day, a thin, muscular, intelligent-looking boy, dressed in the habiliments of earlier years, which he had evidently outgrown,

made his appearance, cap in hand, before Mr Burton the senior clerk, and inquired: 'Sir, if you please, would I be old enough to carry the Marlborough bag? I'm only fourteen yet, but I'll always be growing older and wiser, I hope.'

'And maybe worse!' muttered the clerk, who happened to be out of temper that morning. 'But step in here,' he continued, pointing to another room, 'and Mr Leathem will see what you're fit for.'

Mr Leathem was a quiet elderly gentleman, who had kept the post-office for several years in the rich and gay city of Bath, which was, at the period of our story, the resort of all the fashionables of Britain, especially in the summer season, resembling in that respect what Brighton has since become. He spoke to the boy more civilly than his clerk had done; said he considered him tall enough for the business; and then inquired what was his name, where his parents lived, and if he knew any respectable person who would give him a character for honesty and sobriety, as without such a certificate the post-office could not employ him? The boy answered that his name was Ralph Allen; that his father had been a poor tradesman, but he was dead, and his mother supported herself by taking in washing; and 'I wasn't brought up here, sir; but my mother came in hopes of getting fine work from the gentry; and here's a certificate from a kind gentleman, the vicar of our parish: I used to run errands for him, and he said it might be useful to me.'

'"This is to certify that Ralph Allen is a sensible, honest, industrious boy, and I hope will continue to be so.—William Warburton,"' said the postmaster, reading aloud. 'Well, that's a good certificate, though the writer is unknown to me; but we will let it pass for this time, and take you on trial.'

After several exhortations to be careful of the mail, and walk fast, that he might arrive in time, Ralph Allen was duly equipped with a leathern bag, suspended by a strap over his shoulder, containing all the letters and newspapers in those days transmitted to Marlborough, and sent forth to earn the halfpenny per mile.

Day after day he performed that appointed journey, through sun and shower, going and coming to the entire satisfaction of the postmasters of Bath and Marlborough. Roads were not then so convenient for travellers, nor time so precious with the public, as at present; but Ralph was never known to loiter by the way, nor arrive an hour too late, which could seldom be said of other post-boys. Travellers between the towns soon began to know him on the road, and remarked from stage-coach, wagon, or saddle—the only modes of conveyance in those days—that his conduct was always careful and steady; and people who did not travel trusted him with small messages in consequence of their reports. If a lady wanted a fashionable cap from Bath, or a notable housekeeper some trifle which could be bought cheaper in Marlborough, Ralph Allen was known to be a soberer and less exorbitant carrier than either the coachman or wagoner, and he was preferred accordingly. This was a source of additional gain, which increased every day, till the boy generally reached his destination in either town laden with parcels of all sorts and sizes, for the carriage of which he received from twopence to a farthing, as the case might be, or the liberality of his employers dictated. How the short time allowed between the close of his daily duty and his nightly rest was usually spent in his mother's poor but clean garret, nobody could tell; till Mr Leathem, who had by this time a high opinion of his post-boy for general good conduct and correctness in

his station, inquired one morning, while Ralph waited for the mail, what book was that protruding from his pocket?

'It's the *Universal Spelling-Book*, sir,' said Ralph, reddening as he pulled out the well-worn volume. 'I try to learn at home in the little time I have, and can now nearly read.'

'That's well, my boy,' said Mr Leathem: 'I wish the rest of our boys would spend their leisure time so.'

'And, sir,' continued Ralph, now encouraged to speak out, 'I'm trying to write too, and have got the master of the Blue-Coat School to give me a lesson sometimes for doing his messages, sir.'

'You'll be a clerk yet, Ralph,' said the postmaster laughing. 'But it is a good endeavour, and I hope you'll succeed; but mind be careful of the mail.'

His employer's words turned out true, though spoken half in jest. Ralph continued to earn, by every honest though small way within his reach: his earnings were saved to purchase an old book when he could not borrow it, or supply himself with pens, ink, and paper; by which he at once amused and improved his few leisure hours in reading, or even spelling, to his mother, when her day's toil was also done, and practising the chance lessons he could obtain from the schoolmaster. Reading was at that period a rare thing in his class, and cheap books of instruction were equally so; but from the spelling-book, Ralph Allen advanced to the dictionary and grammar; from 'strokes,' to writing a good fair hand. His savings also increased by slow degrees, for both he and his mother were prudent; and Ralph only wished for the time when he might aspire to some better situation, and be enabled to add to her rest and comfort. Five years had thus passed away; Ralph Allen had grown almost a man,

when all the message-senders of Bath, amongst whom he was well known, rejoiced, even amid their regrets that they must look out for another *carrier*, to hear that Ralph Allen had been promoted, through the kindness of Mr Leathem, to a clerkship in the Bath post-office, and was actually seen in a new suit of clothes performing his new duties at the post-office window. After this his mother washed nothing but lace and cambric, and Ralph was as steady and obliging in the post-office as he had been with the mail on his back. His salary was comparatively small, but his prudence was great ; and in another year or two, people discovered that Ralph had something in the bank. His habits of reading and thought also gave him an ability to invent needful improvements in the post-office, which was then very imperfectly managed. These were modestly proposed ; and as their necessity was seen, they soon obtained the sanction of the superior authorities, and raised the young clerk not only in their estimation, but in office also, as in three years after his entrance he succeeded the senior clerk, Mr Burton, by whom his application for the carriage of the Marlborough bag had been so ungraciously received, and who now retired to a small property he had purchased in the country. Two years more, and Ralph himself began to think of purchasing property also. There was a large sterile farm called Coome Down in the neighbourhood of the city, which the last three tenants had successively left in disgust and weariness, declaring that both their labour and money were lost on such an unprofitable spot, and the landlord offered it for sheep-grazing on the very lowest terms. Great was the astonishment of all who knew him, when Ralph Allen became the purchaser of these poor and barren acres. Some said the young man's brain was turned with the books he read, and even his mother

shook her head, and hoped it would turn out for the best; but Ralph gave up his situation in the post-office, collected round him workmen and tools, and commenced, not without creating much wonder and many surmises, to break up the ground in all directions, as if in search of a mine.

'Neighbour, do you expect to find a pot of gold in that farm?' said an old farmer to him over the fence one morning, where he and his men were delving at a rocky spot that never could be cultivated.

'No,' said Ralph; 'but I expected, and thank Providence, I have found, a good stone quarry, which will repay me, and be useful to yon good town;' and he pointed to the spires of Bath.

'My stars!' cried the farmer, 'he's not mad after all!' And so thought all Ralph's neighbours, when buyers came and workmen thronged to the new quarry; and scarcely a gentleman's house or public building of any description could be commenced in Bath without a supply of stone from Mr Allen, as the Bath post-boy was now deservedly called.

Mrs Allen had long given up washing, and gone to reside in a neat cottage which her son built out of the first produce of his quarry; and many of her former employers saluted the good woman as she passed to St Mary's church in her black sarsanet sac, high-heeled shoes, and velvet hood, like a respectable old lady of the period. About this time the works of the great Dr Warburton were attracting public attention, and much talked of in the best society of Bath. Ralph Allen brought the latest published volume home one day, and found his mother seated in the small parlour with his old friend Mr Leathem, who was about to retire from public business, and had called to see him. 'What books you

do buy, Ralph!' said the old woman, who had always a suspicion of her son's extravagance on this point; and she pointed to a large book-case, where Dryden, Tillotson, and all the best authors of the preceding age might be seen in their works, closely ranged together. 'It was only last week,' continued the good dame, 'that you brought home that book about fame, written by one Mr Pope.'

'And don't you know, mother, who is the writer of this volume?' said Ralph. 'Don't you remember Mr Warburton, the parson of our own Greasley, in Nottinghamshire, who gave me the certificate which I presented to you, Mr Leathem, ten years ago, when I wished to be post-boy to Marlborough?'

This was true; the vicar of Greasley became the celebrated Dr Warburton, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester; and it was said Mr Leathem's family kept that certificate like a sort of relic.

'Ralph Allen's making his fortune,' was the usual remark of everybody about Bath when the quarry was mentioned; and it had now grown an important matter, as the whole property of Coome Down, which so many farmers had called a dead loss, was found to be one vast bed of the best building stone.

Ralph was making money fast, and his deposits in the bank increased every year; but his aims did not end there—the experience of his former situation in the post-office was at length employed to some purpose. Sundry useful arrangements and inventions had long ago made his name and abilities known to the authorities of that department. At the period of our story, the post-office in almost every county was farmed by some wealthy or enterprising person, who took its whole revenue and expenses in his own hands, paying to the government a certain sum annually, according to his contract. Ralph,

who had acquired a considerable acquaintance with all the details of the business, and had, besides, the good opinion of the most influential functionaries, proposed to vest the small fortune already gained by the Coome Down quarry in a post-office contract for all England; and his proposal was accepted. From this period the career of Ralph Allen was one of uninterrupted prosperity. Under his administration, the post-office revenue, even in that age of comparatively little letter-writing, was almost doubled in a few years, owing to the better arrangements introduced by him in the transmission of mails, and various postage regulations, which have made his name celebrated as one of the few who have conferred benefits of a lasting kind on their native country. But Ralph Allen was destined to become, if possible, still more honourably known to fame. From his earliest youth he had cultivated his mind, as well as improved his fortune; as without the former endeavour, the latter would have been but half success, though wealth had been gathered like the sand. His post-office contract in a short time realised such an income, as made the proprietor one of the richest men in the neighbourhood of Bath.

Mrs Allen had lived to see her son's prudent conduct and perseverance rewarded to an extent of which she had never dreamed; and the good dame closed her days in peace and comfort in the pleasant cottage at Coome Down, having nothing to regret, and no annoyance, but a shadowy fear, which at times slightly agitated the calm current of her latter-day thoughts, that Ralph was buying too many books. But having gained the summit of his early ambition—a well and honourably won fortune—he determined to enjoy it agreeably to his own refined taste, in the munificent encouragement of arts and literature.

He had acquired general respect as well as riches; and as his fortune raised him gradually in the scale of society, had won the esteem, and formed the acquaintance, of men celebrated for their talents, and still famous through their works. Pope, Fielding, Swift, and Goldsmith were among the number of his friends; and the titled and fashionable paid a natural tribute to merit and success, by including Mr Allen in their most select society.

The country round Bath is one of the finest districts in England, being diversified with beautiful wood-crowned hills and broad green meadows; one property, in particular, popularly called Prior Park, had long attracted Ralph Allen's eye from the barren slopes of Coome Down, and there, he often said, he should wish, if fortune permitted him, to build a mansion worthy of the scene. This project was at last put in execution. The possessor of the estate ruined his affairs by carelessness and extravagance in London: it was, in consequence, offered for sale, and Ralph Allen, Esq. became the purchaser of Prior Park. Here, on the slope of one of those wood-covered hills which he had often admired, a splendid mansion was erected under his own superintendence, whose beautiful Corinthian portico and tasteful decorations were the theme of praise among all the lovers of art; the former especially being still regarded as unrivalled in English architecture. Here Ralph retired about middle life, leaving the field of active industry to younger and more needy aspirants: here also he gathered round him the most polished society of that fashionable neighbourhood, and many of the authors, the purchase of whose works had once astonished his mother. Mr Allen is well known to all conversant with the literature of those times as its judicious and munificent patron, and, in particular, as the attached friend of the somewhat

irritable poet, Alexander Pope, and the philosophic Bishop Warburton.

The facts of his story, though not so generally known, belong to real life, and are verified by his contemporaries. Prior Park has now become a Catholic college; but its romantic situation and fine Corinthian columns are still reckoned among the attractions of the district; and they offer a lesson of how much may be achieved by well-directed energy and persevering prudence.

# THE TWO MOTTOES.

TWO young men were standing in the booking-office of the Cernay diligences, having taken places in one that was about to start for Kaysersberg. They were apparently of the same age—perhaps four-and-twenty; but there was a striking difference in their persons, and in the expression of their countenances. The shorter of the two was slightly made, pale, and dark, betraying his southern origin at a glance, by his quick movements and impatient gestures. His companion, tall, fair, and blooming, was a good specimen of that mixed race of Alsace, in which the vivacity of the French is tempered by the equanimity and good-humour of the Germans. At their feet were two small portmanteaus, to which the addresses were affixed by sealing-wax. On one might be read, Henri Fortin of Marseilles; and on the seals were the words 'My right.' On the other was written, Joseph Mulzen of Strasburg; and the motto on the seals was 'Charity.'

The clerk had inscribed their names on his list, and was adding the quantity of luggage belonging to each, when Henri asked to have it weighed. The man replied that it would be done at Kaysersberg; but the Marseillais

objected, alleging the inconvenience of such a formality amid all the bustle of arriving, and insisted upon its being done at once, saying he had a right to require it. The office-keeper, with equal obstinacy, refused to comply, and a warm and angry discussion ensued. Joseph tried to put an end to it by observing that they had barely time to dine before the diligence started; but Henri, who prided himself upon acting up to his motto, never would yield when he thought himself in the right; and unfortunately he seldom thought otherwise. At length the man, tired of the debate, quitted the office, and as his assistant spoke nothing but German, Henri decided upon following his cousin, on whom he vented his ill-humour.

'You would make a saint swear at your indifference,' cried he as soon as they were alone. 'Not even to support me against that obstinate fellow.'

'I thought he needed support more than you,' said Joseph laughing; 'for you piled up arguments against him, as though your fortune or your honour depended on the result.'

'Then you think it would be better not to assert one's rights?'

'When those rights are not worth asserting.'

'That is like you,' interrupted Henri with warmth; 'you are always ready to give up to every one: you would be trampled on before you would dream of defending yourself. Instead of looking upon the world as a field of battle, you seem to consider it as a drawing-room, where civilities are exchanged.'

'Not so,' said Joseph; 'but as a ship full of passengers, who ought to shew mutual kindness and forbearance. Every man is my friend until he declares himself my enemy.'

'And I think every man my enemy until he has declared himself my friend. I have always found this sort of prudence the most successful; and I would advise you to adopt the same when we arrive at Kaysersberg. We shall meet there with the other heirs to our uncle's fortune, and depend upon it they will do all in their power to secure the best share; for my part I am resolved not to make the slightest concession.'

The young travellers had now reached the inn where they intended dining. On entering, they found the public room empty; but at the farther end was a table laid for three persons. Henri desired the landlady to bring plates for Joseph and himself.

'Excuse me, sir,' said the woman; 'but you cannot be served here.'

'Why not?' asked the young man.

'Because the persons for whom the table is laid have requested to dine alone.'

'Then let them stay in their own room,' returned Henri sharply; 'this is the public room and the public table, and surely every traveller has an equal right to enter and be served here?'

'What does it signify whether we dine here or in another room?' asked Joseph.

'And what is it to those persons if we choose to remain here?'

'They came before you, sir,' remonstrated the landlady.

'Then it is the first come who give the law in your house?'

'They are known to us besides.'

'Their money is not better than ours, is it?'

'It is our interest to oblige our customers.'

'And all other travellers must obey their caprices?'

'You can be waited on in another apartment.'

'With the remnants from the table of your privileged guests, I suppose?'

The landlady seemed hurt, and said: 'If monsieur thinks he cannot have a good dinner at the *White Horse*, there are other inns in Cernay.'

'Very true,' replied Henri, taking his hat and walking out, regardless of his cousin's attempts to detain him.

Mulzen knew by experience that the best way to act with his cousin was to leave him to himself until the fit was over, for every attempt at reasoning only added fuel to the fire. He decided, therefore, upon remaining where he was, and requested to have dinner served immediately in another room. He was about to go thither, when the persons who were expected made their appearance; they were an old lady with her niece, and an elderly gentleman, who seemed to be their protector. The landlady was giving them an account of what had passed, but perceiving Joseph, she left off abruptly. The latter bowed, and was leaving the room, when the old gentleman stopped him.

'I am very sorry,' said he in a friendly tone, 'for the dispute that has taken place. We had requested to dine alone, to avoid the company of certain individuals whose free manners and conversation might be disagreeable to these ladies, but not to drive other travellers away, as your friend seems to have supposed; and as a proof of it, I hope you will oblige me by sitting down to table with us?'

Joseph thanked him, and endeavoured to excuse himself, saying, that far from feeling offended at their desire to be alone, he thought it a very natural and proper precaution; but M. Rosman, which was the name given by the ladies to their protector, insisted in so frank and

good-humoured a manner, that Joseph thought it best to comply. The old lady, who seemed little used to travelling, sat down opposite to him with her niece, and gave utterance to a deep groan.

'Are you very tired, Charlotte?' asked M. Rosman.

'Am I tired!' repeated the old woman. 'Is that a question, after being shaken all day in that swinging diligence, eating out of my regular hours, running all manner of risks; for I am sure it is a wonder we were not upset fifty times; the diligence was always leaning to one side. I would give a good year of my life for this journey to be at an end.'

'Happily for us, dear aunt, you cannot make such a bargain,' said the young lady, smiling affectionately at her.

'Yes, yes, you may laugh,' returned Madame Charlotte, trying to look displeased; 'young girls are afraid of nothing nowadays! They travel by railway, by steamboat—they would go by balloon if they could! It is the Revolution that has made them so bold. Before the Revolution, the most courageous were content to travel in a cart or on a donkey—and then not unless it was absolutely necessary. I have often heard my dear departed mother say that she had never travelled otherwise than on foot.'

'But then she never went farther than the chief town of the department,' observed M. Rosman.

'She was not the less a worthy and a happy woman, replied Madame Charlotte: 'when a bird has built its nest, it remains in it. The present fashion of being always on the move, diminishes the love of fireside enjoyments: people get so used to be away from their homes, that they cease to care for them, and find a home everywhere. It may be more advantageous to

society, but it makes individuals less happy and contented.'

'Come, come, Charlotte—you have quite a spite against travelling, because of the jolts,' said M. Rosman smiling. 'I hope this soup will dispel some of your prejudices; it could not be better even at Fontaines. I appeal to your impartiality.'

The conversation was continued in the same unembarrassed and cheerful manner; and Mulzen, who at first had discreetly kept silent, soon felt quite at home. M. Rosman frequently addressed himself to him; and they were talking like old friends, when it was announced that the diligence would start in a few minutes. They quickly settled with the landlady, and hastened to the office.

As Joseph arrived, he saw his cousin hurrying towards the same place. Whilst he had partaken of an excellent dinner, Henri had been running from one inn to another, without finding anything prepared; and as the time was gone, he had been forced to purchase a small loaf and some fruit to appease his hunger. This anchorite's repast had by no means improved his temper; which Joseph perceiving, forbore to make any remark; nor had he time, for the other passengers had already taken their places. As the cousins were preparing to follow, they were stopped by the office-keeper, who said he had made a mistake in booking them, for the diligence was already full.

'Full!' cried Henri; 'but you have taken our fare?'

'I am going to return it to you, sir.'

'Not at all!' said the Marseillais; 'when you took my money, you engaged to convey me to Kaysersberg. I have a right to go, and go I will.' And thus saying, he took hold of the leathern strap, and mounting to the

top of the diligence, took possession of the only seat that was not yet occupied. The person to whom it belonged requested him to give it up; but Henri refused decidedly, saying that no one had a right to make him come down, and that if force were attempted, he also would use force. In vain did Joseph remonstrate, and urge him to give up the contested place—the contradiction he had met with, added to his frugal meal, had completely soured him, and he persisted in his refusal.

'Let each have his right!' cried he; 'that is my motto—yours is charity. Be as charitable as you like; for my part I only pretend to be just. I have paid for this place; I have a right to it; and I mean to keep it.'

The dispossessed traveller urged priority of possession; but Henri, who was a lawyer, answered him with scraps of law; and thus they continued exchanging angry explanations, recriminations, and menaces. Madame Charlotte, who heard all from the coupée, groaned audibly, and began to exclaim against travelling in general, and public conveyances in particular. At length Joseph, seeing the disputants becoming more violent, proposed to the office-keeper to hire a cabriolet, in which he and the ejected traveller might follow the diligence. The expedient was adopted, and they all set off.

It was November: the air, already cold and damp when they quitted Cernay, became freezing at the approach of night. In vain Henri, accustomed to the sun of Provence, buttoned his coat up to his chin: he trembled from head to foot in the chilling night fog. His face became almost blue; his teeth chattered; and, to add to his discomfort, a small drizzling rain began to beat in his face, and soon penetrated his garments. His next neighbour, who was well sheltered under an ample

and warmly-lined cloak, might have given him a share of it, without inconvenience to himself; but he was a stout elderly shopkeeper, very careful of himself, and very indifferent about others. When Henri had taken such forcible possession of another's place, he applauded him, saying that each travelled for himself. The young man then thought his maxim perfectly just—now he had a practical illustration of it. Once during the journey his corpulent companion turned to look at him, and observing his miserable condition, said: 'You look as if you were cold, sir?'

'I am wet to the very bones,' replied Henri, scarcely able to speak.

The shopkeeper drew his warm cloak more tightly round him, as if he enjoyed it the more from the contrast, and remarked philosophically: 'It is very injurious to get wet: when you travel again, I would advise you to get a cloak like mine; it is warm, and not dear;' and having delivered himself of this sage advice, he again buried his chin in the warm folds of his cravat, and resumed his comfortable doze.

It had long been dark when they arrived at Kaysersberg. Henri, half dead with cold, hastened to the kitchen of the inn, where a fire was blazing brightly. Among the travellers who surrounded it he perceived Joseph Mulzen and the stranger whose place he had taken: the cabriolet had brought them a nearer way across the country, and they had arrived full an hour before the diligence. Joseph, seeing the state his cousin was in, gave him his place near the fire; but as for his companion, he could not refrain from laughing heartily. 'Upon my word,' said he, 'I ought to be very much obliged to the gentleman. Without his usurpation, I should have been frozen like him, instead of being here

warm and comfortable.' The Marseillais, too much out of temper to make any reply, sat down and warmed himself as well as he was able. As soon as he had in some measure recovered himself, he asked for a room and a bed; but there had been a fair at Kaysersberg, and the inn was full of persons, who intended leaving the town the following day. Joseph and his companion, although they had arrived earlier, had only found one very indifferent bed, which the former, with his usual good-nature, had given up to the stranger. After a great deal of bustling and searching, however, it was found that there was still one bed disengaged; but it was in a room already occupied by four pedlars, who declared they would not admit any one else.

'Have they engaged the room for themselves alone?' asked Henri.

'No,' said the innkeeper; 'each pays for his bed.'

'Then what reason do they give for refusing to admit another?'

'None at all; but as they seem to be quarrelsome fellows, no one wishes to interfere with them.'

'For my part,' said Henri, 'I shall not sit here all night because those insolent fellows choose to monopolise more beds than they can use. Shew me to their room, and let them oppose me if they dare.'

'Take care, Henri,' said Mulzen; 'they are low, vicious men, and will probably insult you.'

'And is it because of their vices that I must lose my rest?' he asked angrily. 'Not I, faith! I shall go to bed in defiance of them.' And taking his travelling-cap, he was leaving the room, when M. Rosman, who had come to look after his luggage, and had heard the words exchanged between the cousins, accosted them in his usual pleasant and friendly manner.

'You are at a loss for beds, I perceive, gentlemen?' he said.

'I shall not be so long,' replied Henri, going towards the door.

'Stop a moment,' said M. Rosman; 'those men may handle you more roughly than you would like. You will find it difficult to convince them that you have an equal right with them. If you will accept a bed at my house, it is at your service. I reside only a few doors from here, and shall feel pleasure in accommodating you.'

The young men bowed, and thanked him; but there was a marked difference in their manner of doing so. Joseph looked pleased and grateful; whilst Henri, who had not forgotten that M. Rosman was the cause of his having lost his dinner at Cernay, was constrained, though polite.

'You are very obliging, sir,' said he, softening his tone; 'but I should be sorry to put you to any inconvenience; besides, I think it will not be amiss to give those fellows a lesson, and teach them to respect the rights of other travellers.' And bidding them good-night, he left the room.

Joseph, fearing the consequences, followed his cousin; but whether they were drowsy, or that the resolute air of the Marseillais deterred them, the pedlars only muttered a little; and Henri took undisturbed possession of his bed. Seeing there was nothing to fear, Joseph returned to the kitchen, where M. Rosman was waiting for him.

On reaching the house of the latter, they found Madame Charlotte and Louise preparing tea before a bright fire of pine cones. M. Rosman said a few words in a whisper to the ladies, who received Joseph with courtesy, and made him sit down to table with them.

Louise poured out the tea, and Madame Charlotte, seating herself in her easy-chair, complained that she still felt the motion of the diligence, and that the bubbling of the kettle reminded her of the noise of the wheels. She asked Joseph what had become of the young man who had taken an outside place by assault; and M. Rosman answered by relating what had passed at the inn.

'He seems determined to have wars and contestations wherever he goes,' observed the old lady; 'if he continue, he will be feared by everybody.'

'A better heart than his could scarcely be met with,' said Joseph; 'but, unfortunately, he is determined to act up to his favourite motto—"Let each have his right."'

'Whilst yours is—Charity,' said the old woman smiling; 'we heard it all at Cernay.'

'Do you travel together?' asked M. Rosman.

'We are cousins,' replied Joseph, 'and have come to Kaysersberg to be present at the opening of a will, which takes place to-morrow morning.'

'A will?' repeated Madame Charlotte in surprise.

'That of our late uncle, Dr Harver.'

The two ladies and M. Rosman exchanged looks.

'So you are the doctor's relatives?' said the latter; 'well, chance could not have directed you better. I have long been your uncle's most intimate friend.'

This species of recognition served as an introduction to speak of the departed. Mulzen had never seen his uncle, but he had felt for him that respectful affection that nature seldom fails to establish between distant members of the same family. He listened with deep interest and emotion to the details of his life, and the particulars of his last moments; and after one of those long, unreserved

conversations, from which all restraint is banished, and in which hearts are laid open without disguise, Joseph retired to his chamber, delighted with his new friends, who on their part were equally pleased with the young man.

It was late when he rose the next morning, the fatigue of the previous day having made him oversleep himself. He dressed in haste, intending to call on his cousin, that they might go together to their uncle's lawyer; but on descending to the parlour, he found the latter there, together with Henri, who had been sent for, and M. Rosman. Madame Charlotte and Louise soon joined them; and when all were assembled, M. Rosman, addressing himself to the young men, said: 'No one here is ignorant of what brings you to Kaysersberg, gentlemen; for my sister-in-law, Madame Charlotte Revel, and her niece, Louise Armand, whose guardian I am, are also come to be present at the opening of the will of their brother and uncle, Dr Harver.'

The young men bowed to Madame Charlotte and Louise, who returned their salute.

'I thought,' continued M. Rosman, 'that as chance had brought hither the parties interested, the doctor's last directions might be read at my house.'

Henri bowed his assent: they all sat down; and the notary was about to break the seal, when he stopped and said: 'This will is already of an old date, and during the last few months of Dr Harver's life, he frequently expressed his intention of destroying it, so as to leave to each of his heirs the share assigned them by law. I can only attribute his not having done so to the suddenness of his removal. I thought it my duty to declare this; and now I ask all the parties interested, who are here present, if they are willing, with one accord, to destroy

this will, without knowing which of them is enriched or set aside by it?'

This unexpected proposal was followed by a pause. Mulzen was the first to break silence.

'For my part,' said he modestly, 'having no special claim to my uncle's regard, I cannot think it any sacrifice to accept of an equal share, and I willingly agree to the proposal.'

'As far as I am concerned,' said Madame Charlotte, 'I have not the slightest objection.'

'And I consent to it in my ward's name,' added M. Rosman.

'There remains only this gentleman, then,' said the notary, turning to Henri, who seemed somewhat embarrassed.

'Like my cousin,' said he, 'I have no reason to expect a decision in my favour, but on that very account I withhold my consent. Whatever may have been my uncle's intentions, his will should be regarded as sacred. To alter it would neither be just to the testator nor to the unknown legatee.'

'In that case let us say no more about it,' said the notary; 'unanimity could alone legitimise such a proceeding. Let each have his right, as the gentleman requires, and be so good as listen:

"Of the four individuals who have any claim to my fortune, I am only acquainted with two—my sister, Charlotte Revel, and my niece, Louise Armand; but as these two have long had but one interest and one heart, and in reality form but one person, there is only Louise Armand to inherit on that side. It was my first intention to leave all I possess to her; but of my two unknown nephews, one may be equally worthy of my regard: the difficulty is to distinguish between them.

"Not being able to do it myself, and knowing the tact and intelligence of my niece Louise, I leave it to her judgment, and declare my sole heir whichever of her cousins she chooses for her husband." '

A long pause followed the reading of this singular will. The young men seemed embarrassed, and Louise's eyes were fixed on the ground.

'The doctor has given my niece a difficult task,' said Madame Charlotte at length.

'Not so difficult as you imagine, my sister,' said M. Rosman smiling. 'I have long known the contents of Harver's will; and the inquiries I made in consequence, have satisfied me that, however she may choose, she has nothing to fear.'

'Then let the young lady decide,' said the notary laughing; 'since it is in all safety, it can only be a matter of inspiration.'

'You must decide for me, aunt,' said Louise in a low tone, hiding her face in Madame Charlotte's bosom.

'My dear child,' said the latter, 'it is very embarrassing. I really do not know '——

Pronouncing these words, with a look of uncertainty she glanced at Mulzen. Henri perceived it, and exclaimed: 'I see your choice is made, madame; and though I must regret it, I cannot but approve of it.—Mademoiselle,' he added, taking Joseph's hand, and leading him to the young lady, 'your aunt has seen and judged aright: my cousin is more worthy than I.'

'What you say proves the contrary,' said Madame Charlotte with emotion; 'but we already knew M. Mulzen; and—you deserve that I should be candid with you.'

'Say on,' interrupted Henri.

'Well, then, his motto gives me confidence—yours

n akes me fear : he promises indulgence—and you justice. Alas ! my dear sir, justice may suffice for the angels, but we poor mortals need charity.'

'Perhaps you are right, madame,' said Henri pensively; 'since yesterday, it seems as if everything had conspired to teach me this lesson. My determination to defend my rights has, in every instance, turned against me, whilst my cousin's generous behaviour has always been to his advantage. Yes, Joseph is right; his motto is better than mine, for it comes nearer to the divine precept. Christ did not say, Let each have his right; but, "Love your neighbour as yourself."'

# JACQUES LAFITTE.

'IF men make their boast of the honourable name, the rank in life, which they inherit from their fathers, why should it not be a much nobler boast to owe only to myself, to my own talent, my genius, my industry, name and fortune and position in society—to make them all, in short, for myself?'

Such were the reflections of a youth who, one morning in the year 1787, was hurrying, in much apparent agitation, along the street of the Chaussée d'Antin, and who now stopped, as if undecided what to do, before one of the handsomest hotels in Paris, which had been long the abode of a great banker.

No sooner had he passed through the gate, than a very natural feeling of timidity made the youth draw back a few steps, while his mild and pleasing countenance seemed to assume a still more pensive expression as his eye for a moment fell upon his plain coarse garb. The courage which had led him on so far had suddenly abandoned him, and he would have gone away as he came, if the concierge, or house-porter, who had been for some moments watching and smiling at his embarrassment,

had not advanced towards him and inquired what he wanted.

'I wish to see Monsieur Perregaux,' replied he, encouraged by something in the look of the man.

'You can walk up-stairs,' answered the porter, pointing to a wide handsome staircase, which our young hero ascended as if every step was made of fire, so much did he dread cutting with his hob-nailed and dusty shoes the soft rich carpets which covered it.

In the anteroom he found a great many people, and stood modestly in a corner, while the big tears were trembling in his eyes as he thought of his native town, of the paternal roof, of the companions of his childhood, and of the last adieu of his mother—her anguish, her fears, her admonitions.

'You have here a humble home, but still a home,' said she weepingly; 'what do you expect to do at Paris?'

'I want to make my fortune,' replied the young man, 'and then to share it with you, and my father, and my brothers.'

'Fortune does not always come to him who seeks,' said the anxious mother.

'But it never comes to those who do not seek,' replied the young enthusiast.

'Well,' said the fond mother, 'go, if it must be so; but should you not succeed, do not be ashamed to return to us. The house of your father, and the arms of your mother, will be ever open to you, and, like the prodigal, you shall have the fatted calf killed for you.'

He had laughed in his youthful ardour at the puerile fears of his mother. 'Not succeed!' said he to himself; 'impossible!' Nor was his faith shaken in the morning on which he left his home; for that morning was a lovely one in April, and how could he distrust the gracious

providence of God, whilst the very air he breathed seemed redolent with his goodness? But as he drew near the end of his journey, the goal of his hopes, he began to feel some misgivings; and by degrees they took such possession of his mind, and of every faculty, that at the moment it came to his turn to have an audience of the banker, he would gladly have been anywhere else.

Monsieur Perregaux was standing in the window: he was reading a letter, and hardly raised his eyes as the youth entered, as if awaiting his speaking; but hearing nothing but a hurried breathing, he at length looked up, and perceived a very pleasing countenance, and lips parted as if to address him, but no sound was audible.

'You wished to see me, sir?' said the banker so courteously, that the youth recovered his voice and courage sufficiently to reply.

'Sir,' said he, 'I have neither name, nor fortune, nor station, but I have the will and the power to labour. Can you give me a place in your office? The lowest would satisfy me.'

'What is your name, young man?' asked M. Perregaux, unable to take his eyes off his interesting countenance, and reading talent in the bright eye that, in renewed hope, now fearlessly met his.

'Jacques Lafitte,' was the answer.

'Your age?'

'I am twenty; I was born in 1767,' answered he.

'Are you a Parisian?' was the banker's next question.

'No, sir; I am from Bayonne,' answered Jacques.

'What is your father?' rejoined the banker.

'He is a carpenter,' replied the youth; 'but he has ten children,' he hastily added, 'and I am come to Paris to try to help my father to support them.'

'It is a laudable design, young man,' answered the

banker, 'but I have no place vacant.' Then added, as he saw the utter disappointment that marked that expressive countenance, 'at present at least. I am sorry that it is so, but another time, perhaps.' Then dismissing the youth with a courteous but imperative gesture, he was obliged to retire.

Everything seemed to swim before his eyes. He knocked up against the door, which he forgot to open; his foot slipped in the anteroom; and he nearly fell down the staircase. All the courage he had exerted—and more is necessary than may be at first imagined in addressing a great man and asking a favour of him—all this courage had failed as he heard the words of the rejection. He felt a kind of shame, nay, almost of remorse, at having exposed himself to a refusal; and the last words of the banker, and the last words of his mother, seemed ringing in his ears.

Slowly and with downcast eyes he was crossing the banker's court-yard, when a pin on the ground caught his attention. He stooped, picked it up, and stuck it carefully in the lining of the cuff of his coat. This action, trifling as it was, decided the fortunes of the carpenter's son.

M. Perregaux was still standing in the window, unable to shake off the painful impression left by the look of almost agonised disappointment which his refusal had called up to the interesting countenance of the young petitioner. Involuntarily he gazed after him till he left the room, and still followed him with his eyes as he crossed the court with slow and languid step, his youthful figure drooping under disappointment, and deep dejection marking every feature. Suddenly he saw him stoop to some object too minute for him to distinguish from the window, and pick it up. By the use he made

of it, the banker guessed what it must be; and the strong impression made by this little incident upon his mind, is perhaps inconceivable by those who know not how accurately character may be estimated by trifles. It was sufficient to enable M. Perregaux to discern in the youthful suitor he had rejected a mind trained to order and economy. 'The man,' he said, 'who would not let even a pin be lost, must have habits of calculation, order, and steadiness;' and opening the window, he gave a slight cough. Jacques looked up, and saw the banker beckoning to him to come back. Quickly was he again on the handsome staircase; but we will not say that this time he was quite as cautious of spoiling the carpets; and once more he stood, with head erect, in the presence of the banker.

'You will grant my request?' said he to him in a tone of happy confidence.

'What makes you so sure?' asked the banker with a smile.

'Why otherwise would you have called me back?' said Lafitte.

'Quick intellect, order, and economy!—you ought to make a good clerk,' was the cordial response of M. Perregaux. 'Go to the bank; I shall be there immediately, and will set you to work.'

Such a mind as that of Jacques Lafitte could not long remain in a subordinate capacity. The Revolution broke out. At the time of the Assembly of Notables he was book-keeper; then cash-keeper; and in 1804, partner to M. Perregaux; and soon after, his successor and executor. In 1809 he was appointed director, and in 1814 president of the Bank of France, having been previously made president of the Chamber of Commerce, and judge of the Tribunal of Commerce for the Seine department, which

in 1816 he was chosen to represent in the Chamber of Deputies. After the Revolution of July 1830, he filled some of the highest offices of the state. His whole career was honourable to himself and beneficial to others. Honourable to himself, for he was indebted, under providential blessing, to his own talent and irreproachable conduct for his brilliant success; and useful to others, for he never lost an opportunity of doing good. His benefits are still fresh in the memory—the heart memory—of many. A child of the people himself, he never forgot the first day he stood a suppliant in the anteroom of M. Perregaux; and never did heavy heart, that he could relieve of its burden, return unsolaced.

He died on the 26th of March 1844. Some short time before, he had sent for his grandchildren, the children of his only daughter, the Princess de la Moskowa; and having embraced them, and taken a tender leave of his wife and daughter and son-in-law, he gently expired without a struggle or any apparent suffering.

# THE SEVEN-SHILLING PIECE.

IT was during the panic of 1826 that a gentleman, whom we shall call Mr Thompson, was seated with something of a melancholy look in his dreary back-room, watching his clerks paying away thousands of pounds hourly. Thompson was a banker of excellent credit; there existed perhaps in the city of London no safer concern than that of Messrs Thompson and Co.; but at a moment such as I speak of, no rational reflection was admitted, no former stability was looked to; a general distrust was felt, and every one rushed to his banker's to withdraw his hoard, fearful that the next instant would be too late, forgetting entirely that this step was that of all others the most likely to insure the ruin he sought to avoid.

But to return. The wealthy citizen sat gloomily watching the outpouring of his gold, and with a grim smile listening to the clamorous demands on his cashier; for although he felt perfectly easy and secure as to the ultimate strength of his resources, yet he could not repress a feeling of bitterness as he saw constituent after

constituent rush in, and those whom he fondly imagined to be his dearest friends eagerly assisting in the run upon his strong-box.

Presently the door opened, and a stranger was ushered in, who, after gazing for a moment at the bewildered banker, coolly drew a chair, and abruptly addressed him. 'You will pardon me, sir, for asking a strange question; but I am a plain man, and like to come straight to the point.'

'Well, sir?' impatiently interrupted the other.

'I have heard that you have a run on your bank, sir.'

'Well?'

'Is it true?'

'Really, sir, I must decline replying to your very extraordinary query. If, however, you have any money in the bank, you had better at once draw it out, and so satisfy yourself: our cashier will instantly pay you;' and the banker rose, as a hint for the stranger to withdraw.

'Far from it, sir: I have not one sixpence in your hands.'

'Then may I ask what is your business here?'

'I wished to know if a small sum would aid you at this moment?'

'Why do you ask the question?'

'Because if it would, I should gladly pay in a small deposit.'

The money-dealer stared.

'You seem surprised: you don't know my person or my motive. I'll at once explain. Do you recollect some twenty years ago when you resided in Essex?'

'Perfectly.'

'Well, then, sir, perhaps you have not forgotten the turnpike-gate through which you passed daily? My

father kept that gate, and was often honoured by a few minutes' chat with you. One Christmas morning my father was sick, and I attended the toll-bar. On that day you passed through, and I opened the gate for you. Do you recollect it, sir?'

'Not I, my friend.'

'No, sir; few such men remember their kind deeds, but those who are benefited by them seldom forget them. I am perhaps prolix: listen, however, only a few moments, and I have done.'

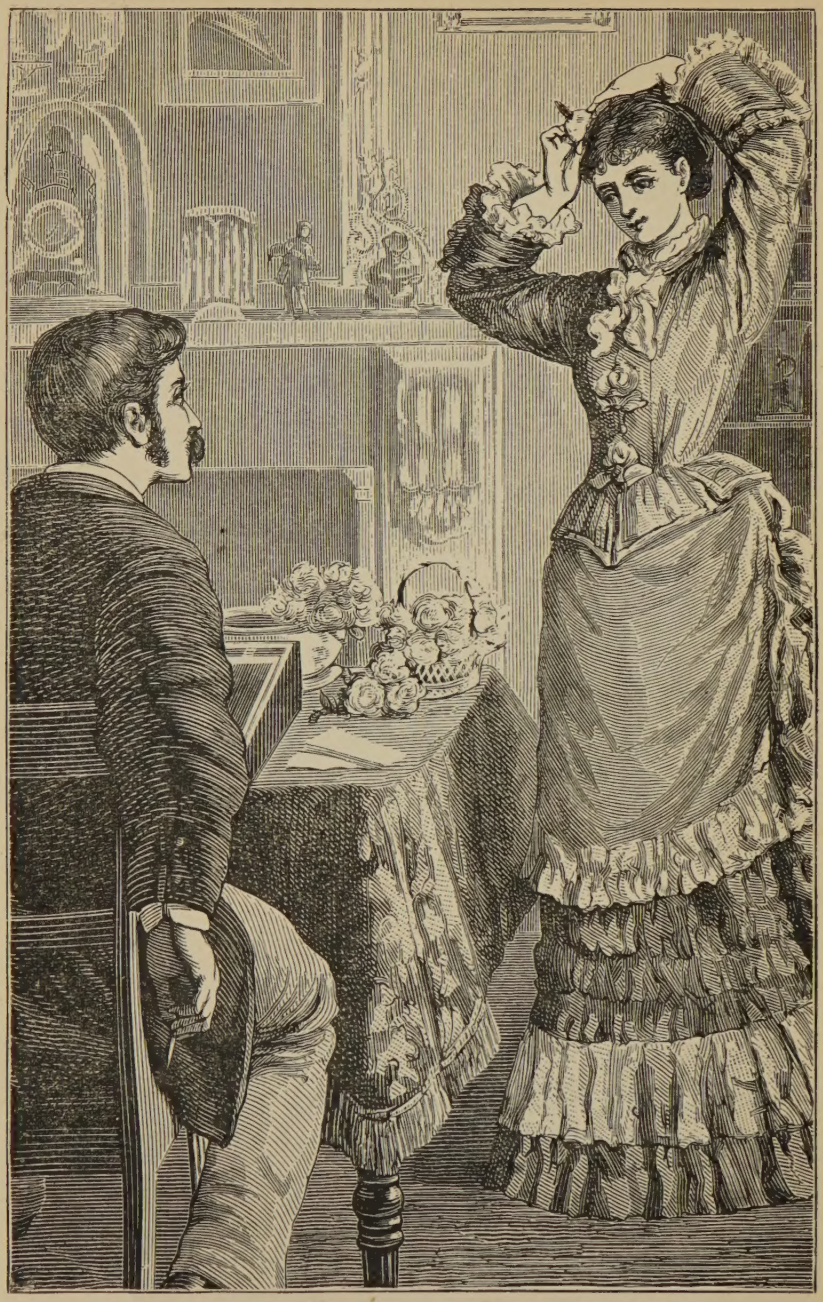
The banker began to feel interested, and at once assented.

'Well, sir, as I said before, I threw open the gate for you, and as I considered myself in duty bound, I wished you a happy Christmas. "Thank you, my lad," replied you—"thank you; and the same to you: here is a trifle to make it so;" and you threw me a seven-shilling piece. It was the first money I ever possessed; and never shall I forget my joy on receiving it, or your kind smile in bestowing it. I long treasured it, and as I grew up, added a little to it, till I was able to rent a toll myself. You left that part of the country, and I lost sight of you. Yearly, however, I have been getting on; your present brought good fortune with it: I am now comparatively rich, and to you I consider I owe all. So this morning, hearing accidentally that there was a run on your bank, I collected all my capital, and have brought it to lodge with you, in case it can be of any use: here it is, sir—here it is;' and he handed a bundle of bank-notes to the agitated Thompson. 'In a few days I'll call again;' and snatching up his hat, the stranger, throwing down his card, walked out of the room.

Thompson undid the roll: it contained thirty thousand pounds! The stern-hearted banker—for all bankers must

be stern—burst into tears. The firm did not require this prop ; but the motive was so noble, that even a millionaire sobbed—he could not help it. The firm is still one of the first in London.

The thirty thousand pounds of the turnpike-boy have now grown into some two hundred thousand pounds. Fortune has well disposed of her gifts.



FORTUNE-SEEKERS AND FORTUNE-MAKERS.

# FORTUNE-SEEKERS AND FORTUNE-MAKERS.

'WHERE'S Fred this evening?' inquired Francis Bolton, putting his head in at the half-open door of the little parlour behind a grocer's shop in one of the leading thoroughfares of London. The query was addressed to a young but pale and careworn-looking matron, who was bending over an infant, hushing it to rest, whilst four older children, of various ages, were gamboling at her feet.

'He's just gone out with Mr Hawkins,' was the reply, and a suppressed sigh accompanied the words.

'What! left his business on a Saturday night?' interrogated the visitor, who was the brother of the shopkeeper. 'It is surely some matter of importance that has taken him out then?' These observations were intended to call forth an answer; but the wife only looked up, and shook her head mournfully.

The visitor now entered the apartment, and sat down by her side. He affectionately patted the head of a rosy boy of seven; playfully discomposed the flaxen ringlets of a smiling girl of five; took a younger one on his knee; and bade the other play at ball or hide-and-seek

for his amusement. 'My dear Mrs Bolton,' he then said in an anxious and somewhat agitated tone, 'you must use your influence to prevent this close intimacy between Hawkins and your husband, or it will be Alfred's ruin.' Another sigh escaped the lips of the young matron. It was a sigh which said: 'My influence is not so great as it was eight years ago;' but still she spoke not. 'He 's an idle, dissolute fellow, I assure you,' her companion pursued; 'one of those fellows who live upon their wits. His convivial spirit makes him attractive amongst a certain class of persons; but he 's a dangerous acquaintance, especially to one of Fred's irresolute character.'

'I am too well aware of that,' the wife now made answer; 'yet nothing *I* can say will induce Alfred to think so. Would it not be well for *you* to speak to him on the subject?' she asked.

'My interference, unhappily, would answer no good purpose, Susan. Fred thinks that, because he is older than I am, I have no right to counsel him, and he is only angry if I attempt it.'

The dialogue was here interrupted by the apprentice calling out from the shop: 'Will master be in soon, ma'am?' And Mrs Bolton, looking through the still half-open door, perceived that the counter was thronged with customers.

'I must go and assist John. I am sure you will excuse my leaving you so abruptly,' she quietly said, depositing her precious charge, which she had by this time lulled to repose, in the little cot which swung by her side. 'Have you any message for your brother?' she asked, as she moved towards the door; adding: 'I cannot press you to wait with the expectation of seeing him; I know you are anxious to get home to your family.'

'I very much wished to see him, and I thought I should be sure to find him at home to-night,' Francis returned.

'I 'll tell him then that you called.'

'Tell him also that it is the 19th day of the month; he will understand you.' The wife faintly smiled an assent, and retreated.

'Don't go yet, Uncle Frank,' cried the eldest boy, running up and clasping the young man's knees; 'stop and have a game with us first. Father used to play with us sometimes, but now he is always out.'

'*Always* out?'

'Yes, uncle, he 's always out after tea; and I 'm at school all day, so he can never play with us.'

'When he went out to-night, mother cried,' chimed in the little girl, and her own bright eyes were overflowing with tears as she spoke. 'She said: "Don't go, don't go," to father so many times, that he was angry with her, and so cross to us.'

'Poor children!' the visitor soliloquised, 'your condition is, I fear, more unhappy than your young hearts conceive. I can't stay to-night, my dears,' he kindly said, caressing them by turns; then looking tenderly at the unconscious infant, as he slept peacefully in his little bed, he darted through the shop, nodding affectionately to his gentle sister-in-law as he passed.

We will now introduce the reader to a similar apartment, in which another family group were assembled. This difference, however, existed: the countenance of the fair young matron was the personification of peace and happiness, and the entrance of Francis Bolton was the signal for a burst of delight.

'I am late this evening, but I hope you have not been anxious, dearest Letty!' the husband exclaimed, as he

tenderly saluted his wife. 'When I left home in the morning, I was not aware that business would call me to my brother's.

'Oh, I was not afraid that you were spending your week's earnings at a tavern,' she playfully made answer. The young man sighed. 'Why, my dear Frank, you look as grave as if you had really been guilty of the thing. Ha! have I surmised aright?' and she looked up with a smile which contradicted her words.

'No, my love; but I will tell you when we are alone what it is which causes my gravity. Now give the baby to me, and go to market;' and as he spoke, he took the infant from her arms, and threw a handful of silver into her lap. 'Be economical to-night, Letty,' he whispered, as she proceeded to equip herself in her bonnet and cloak.

'Am I not always economical?' the wife inquired.

'Yes, my love; I've no cause for complaint on that score; but I wish you to be more than usually so; I 'll tell you why when you return.'

'Nay, tell me now, dear Frank; pray don't keep me in suspense. I fear there is something the matter.'

'No, no—nothing serious, my dear; don't be alarmed; it 's only a trifling loss, which we must redeem by practising a little self-denial. Perhaps,' he added with a forced laugh—'perhaps it is a *happy* event, for it may teach me to be more cautious.'

'You have been called upon to pay the bill you accepted for your brother,' she gently said.

'Even so. It is the first time I ever did such a thing, and depend upon it, Letty, it is the *last* I will put my hand to.'

'But you thought to serve your brother, so you must not reflect upon yourself, dear Frank,' she soothingly observed.

'I did; but I now see that I shall impoverish my own family without materially benefiting him; and this I do not think it right to do, even for a brother.' The wife made no further comment; but when she returned with the provision for the week's consumption, it was obvious that she had borne her husband's injunction in mind.

Ere the evening was over, the quietude of the little family was broken in upon by the entrance of Alfred Bolton, who, elated with some information he had just received, and half inebriated with the copious potations of ale which he had drunk, saluted his brother with a blow on the shoulder, which made him shrink to a little distance.

'I've excellent news for you, my boy—excellent news!' he began: 'so let 's have a glass over it.'

'You know, Fred, that I belong to the Total Abstinence Society,' Francis replied.

'Oh, I forgot that. Then I suppose,' he sneeringly added, 'you wouldn't treat a friend, or even a brother, with a glass; and so you save your pocket and quiet your conscience at the same time.'

'You are quite right, Fred; I do most certainly save my pocket and quiet my conscience; but my principal motive in joining that society was, that I might set an example to others.'

'And have you found the plan answer?' Alfred laughingly inquired.

'I have. I hope I have been the means of rescuing two or three families from the sin in which drunkenness is sure to involve them, and I yet hope to exert similar influence over many more.'

'You 'll never bring *me* to sign *my* name to such a pledge!' Alfred interrupted him by exclaiming. 'But

we'll drop this subject; we shall never agree upon it; and I've something more interesting to talk about.'

'I hope the good news you have to communicate is, that you will be able to refund the money I paid for you to-day?' Francis gravely remarked.

'Oh, I shall be able to pay that and every other debt in a very short time.'

'From what source, pray?'

'Why, I have a fortune in view.'

'Not from the profits of your business, if you leave it, as you are now doing, on a Saturday night.'

'No, I shall never get a fortune by shopkeeping, that's sure. I wasn't cut out for it. I was born to *spend* a fortune, not to make one.'

'But you must make it before you can spend it.'

'Not if it's ready-made for me.'

'I don't understand what you mean by all this, Fred; and, to own the truth, I am rather anxious to know what good prospect you have of refunding this money, for I have been obliged to draw upon a little reserve I had made for a specific object in order to settle the bill.'

'Oh, you must wait a few weeks—only a few weeks, and then you'll see me driving my phaeton.'

'More likely that I shall see you in a prison.'

'You are very fond of prophesying a prison for me, Frank. I can't say that I think it altogether brotherly. However, time will prove which of us is in the right.'

'The tradesman who leaves his business to his wife and his apprentice, and spends his Saturday night at a tavern, is on the high-road to a prison, or I'm very much mistaken,' Francis remarked.

'That visit to the *White Lion* to-night was the most lucky thing that ever happened to me,' the young man returned. 'And now I'll tell you all about it. What

should I see there but an advertisement for one Alfred Bolton, the nephew of the late Captain Thomas Bolton of the Royal Marines, with the information that a large sum of money, willed to him by the said captain, lay in the hands of the executors of the deceased!'

'And is that the only ground for your great expectations?'

'*Only* ground! Why, I think that is enough. You know, Frank, that father used to talk about a brother Tom, who ran away from home when a youth, and it was supposed took to a seafaring life. Well, there can't be a doubt that this is the very man.'

'I don't agree with you in concluding that there can't be a doubt. The names are common.'

'True; but the coincidence of names and profession is singular. I am quite satisfied that I am the person.'

'Well, if you can make the executors as well satisfied, it will be a good thing; but *I'm* not so sanguine.'

'And I suppose you'd have me say: "Oh, it's no use trying," and go plodding on behind my counter without attempting to better myself.'

'No, Fred, that is not my advice. I would have you apply by all means; but at the same time I would not have you suffer yourself to be so elated with the expectation that a disappointment would greatly depress you; nor would I see you neglecting one of your *positive* duties in the pursuit of an *uncertain* good.

'That's just like you, Frank.'

'Is it not common sense and prudence?'

'Well, well; call it what you like. Now I'll go home and tell the news to Suky.'

'Poor Susan!' his brother responded, 'she looks very pale and ill. I fear she is suffering from the double duty you impose upon her.'

'Oh, she shall ride in her carriage soon. Good-by, good-by;' and the visitor made an exit as abrupt as his entrance had been.

The notion that a fortune was only awaiting his putting forth his hand to take it having once got possession of the mind of Alfred Bolton, he took no further interest in his business. The shop he occupied had been established for more than thirty years. His father had brought up a large family in respectability from its profits, and industry and perseverance would have insured the same success to him. His natural indolence was, however, encouraged by the society he made choice of, which, together with his weakness of mind and unstable principles, led to the most unhappy results. The connections which commenced with an occasional visit to the tavern, proceeded in time to positive intemperance; and Bolton now seldom returned to his distressed family until in a state of intoxication. Poor Susan did all in her power to keep the connection together; she strove to supply her husband's place in the shop, though she was necessarily obliged to neglect her children, and sacrifice the domestic comfort of their home. The apprentice, taking advantage of his master's inattention to business, and thinking that a woman had no right to assume the authority, became remiss in his duties. He transgressed the rules of the house with impunity, and at last became so daring in his resistance of control, that Mrs Bolton, though with great reluctance, was obliged to lodge complaints against him to her husband. The remonstrances of an idle and intemperate master could not, however, be expected to have much effect upon the youth. He defied his power, and still persisted in the same practices.

Such a state of things could not long continue. The wholesale dealers with whom Bolton transacted his

business sent in their bills at the usual time; but there was no money to meet their demands. The principal as well as the profits had been expended in endeavours to obtain documents, which, after all, proved to be useless, and in libations at the tavern to drown care and stifle the stings of conscience.

To add to the troubles from which the family were suffering, an epidemic which was raging in the neighbourhood seized the younger branches, and one after another was attacked. Fears were entertained that they would fall victims to the disease, and this new calamity called forth all the mother's feelings. She could now no longer fill her husband's place, and the business, in its turn, gave way to these pressing duties.

Mrs Bolton was, late one evening, sitting with the youngest of her children in her arms, expecting every hour would terminate his life, when her husband's brother entered the same little parlour to which we introduced the reader at the commencement of our narrative. He did not now, however, inquire as before, for Alfred, but seating himself in silence by the side of the weeping mother, cast on her a compassionating and sympathising glance. 'I am sent to you by your husband, my dear Mrs Bolton,' he at length said, bending as he spoke over the sick child, in order to conceal his emotion.

'By Alfred?' she inquired. 'What is the matter? Is he ill?'

'No, not ill; but he will not be able to see you to-night.'

A gleam of the truth crossed the mind of the unhappy wife, but no burst of agony escaped her. She had grown familiar with misfortune, and this fresh disaster was only what she had for some weeks anticipated.

'He is in a prison,' she said in that hollow tone bespeaking a depth of distress which cannot vent itself in tears or expressions of anguish. 'I guess it all too well—I have long foreseen this termination.'

'And so have I, dear Susan,' Francis affectionately returned; 'but that has not softened the blow. It has distressed me and Letty beyond measure to see you and your innocent children suffering from the misconduct of my foolish brother. Say, however, what we can do to serve you?'

'You are very kind,' the wife returned, whilst a smile for an instant illumined her pale, careworn features—'you are very kind; but I cannot ask you to provide my children with that support which their father might earn for them. Things *must* now shortly come to a climax, and then, if it is the will of Providence that they should be spared, I will work for them with my own hands.'

'But you are ill, and unequal to any further exertion.'

'You know not what a mother can do for her offspring,' she energetically made answer.

That night, in the gloom and solitude of a home which had once been the abode of happiness—a home from which she expected shortly to be driven—Susan Bolton closed the eyes of her youngest-born.

It may be here necessary to inform the reader that Alfred Bolton's claim to the advertised property had not been acknowledged by the executors of the deceased captain. Several other candidates had come forward with him. These had, however, been alike unsuccessful in proving their identity; and this circumstance had strengthened Bolton in his conviction that he was the person to whom it really belonged. He protested that the executors were a set of rogues, who had resolved to

keep the money in their own hands; and neither the gloom of his prison-home, the prospect of insolvency, nor the destitution of his family, could daunt his hopes of one day being master of the disputed wealth. He was resolved, he said, when once again at large, to prosecute the knaves who were endeavouring to rob him of his right; and vain were poor Susan's tears and prayers that he would drop all thoughts of the unfortunate business, and turn his energies to the settlement of his own affairs.

Francis was equally urgent on the subject; and though it was by his generous aid alone that the family were saved from starvation, his brother would not listen to his counsel.

'Alfred,' he said to him one evening as he sat at the window of his room overlooking his fellow-debtors, who were amusing themselves with the monotonous prison games in the court below, 'I hope you have now seen the fallacy of pursuing a shadow, and, by so doing, losing the substance. You must be aware that, but for the expectation you had of that property, and the consequent neglect of your shop, you might have been still in your snug little parlour instead of this miserable abode.'

'You are wrong in terming it a shadow, Frank,' his brother interposed. 'The money is as surely mine as that I sit upon this seat; and I shall yet be able to *prove* that it is so.'

'If that is your determination,' the younger Bolton returned, 'I have no hope for your future prospects.'

'But what am I to do?' Alfred impatiently asked. 'I shall have neither money nor credit to begin the world again with. Am I to see my family die of starvation, and then throw myself into the river?'

'You know that I advocate neither apathy nor despair,'

his brother returned. 'I would see you exert your energies, but then they should be directed in the right course. Your best way will be, on your release from confinement, to take some situation in the line of business to which you have been accustomed.'

'What! I who have been a master for these ten years become a servant! No, Frank, I will be no man's slave!'

'You are the slave of your own false pride,' cried Francis; 'and that is thraldom far more ignoble than is his who literally wears a chain of bondage. I tell you, Fred, that the pursuit of an honest calling, however humble, would be honourable to your character, instead of entailing disgrace; and your creditors would be more likely, at some future period, to offer you further assistance in setting you up in your business again, if they saw that you were industrious and steady.'

'Ah, all this is very fine in theory, but it will be very difficult to practise it.'

'You know that I am not above being in the employment of another,' the younger brother remarked.

'True, you fill a subordinate situation; but then you have others under you.'

'All this is great folly, Fred,' Francis resumed; 'nay, it is worse than folly. The grand criterion of respectability is for a man to do his duty, let that duty lie in whatever path it may.'

After the usual law process, Alfred Bolton passed through the insolvent debtors' court, and was set at large. All the worldly wealth he had then to call his own was a few articles of furniture and wearing apparel, and these he removed from his commodious house in town to a mean lodging in the Surrey suburbs. Even here, however, Susan's clever management and good taste produced an

air of comfort; and she generously forebore to make any allusions to their former situation, lest her husband should imagine that she intended it as a reproof. With the view of assisting in the maintenance of the family, she recommenced the business by which she had supported herself prior to her marriage; but she now found it to be a difficult task. When a woman in the humbler classes of society has the charge of a young family, it is quite sufficient for her to fulfil those duties; and in proportion as her attention is directed to other objects, the comforts of home, and the mental and physical health of her children, must suffer. To Mrs Bolton there was, unhappily, no choice. No sooner was her husband at liberty, than he fell into his former practices; he put off the execution of the plan his brother had recommended, with the vague expectation of being able to get possession of what he termed his right. His days were therefore spent in transacting business in conjunction with a disreputable attorney, who fed his hopes with the agreement that his client should handsomely recompense him in the event of success; and his evenings in convivial parties at a tavern, for those by whom his society was considered a pleasant addition paid his reckoning, with the resolve to indemnify themselves when Bolton should become a rich man.

Thus week after week passed. The attorney, in the name of his client, now commenced proceedings against the executors of the late Captain Bolton's will; and the young man was in ecstasies with the prospect, which his own imagination filled up with gold, and all the luxuries it will procure. Susan was one morning sitting engaged with her needle, with her four surviving little ones about her—for her means would not allow her to send them to school, and their father's pride could not submit to the

humiliation of receiving their education as a charity—when Bolton and his man of business unexpectedly stopped at the door in a hackney-coach. The former alighted in great haste, saying that he wanted to present some valuable papers which he had in his possession before the court.

'I wish you had come a few minutes earlier,' his wife observed. 'There has been a person here inquiring for you, and I have just said I did not know when you would be in.'

'What sort of a person?'

'An aged sailor-looking man with a wooden leg. Indeed I thought he had some especial motive in calling, for he seemed very anxious to see you, and made inquiries respecting your father.'

'Oh, he has some intelligence to give me regarding the money: how unfortunate I missed him! Which way did he go?'

'Down the street towards the Westminster Road.'

'I'll follow him. A sailor with a wooden leg did you say, Susan?' His wife nodded assent, and leaping into the vehicle, Bolton drove down the street with even greater haste than before.

Scarcely had Mrs Bolton reseated herself in order to resume her occupation, when a loud summons at the knocker brought her again to the door. It was her husband, who, having almost immediately overtaken the person he was in quest of, had sent the lawyer on with the papers, and returned with the view of questioning the man ere he himself made his appearance in the court.

'Be seated, my friend,' he said, placing him, as he spoke, an arm-chair by the side of the fire. 'You look weary; you shall have a glass of ale, and then I will listen to what you have to relate.'

'Mine is a sad story, sir,' the old man made answer, and he looked very complacently at the refreshment which Mrs Bolton now brought forth.

'You have some particulars to give me regarding *my* family?' Bolton observed, a little disconcerted at the last remark.

'Well, sir, I don't know yet whether it may be about your family, but I hope it is.'

'I don't understand you: I thought, from what my wife told me, that you knew my father, Mr Francis Bolton; and I concluded, as you were a sailor, you had some knowledge also of Captain Thomas Bolton.'

'Are you the son of Francis Bolton of York, sir?'

'I am.'

'And you have a brother called Alfred?'

'No: I am Alfred Bolton—my brother's name is Francis. I am the eldest son, though I was not named after my father.'

'Then I believe you are the young man I am in search of.'

'Well, well, my good friend, now you are satisfied on that head, let me hear what you have to communicate. I have a fortune resting on a straw, and I'll pay you well if you can turn it in my favour.'

'A fortune?—pay me?—I don't know what you mean, sir.'

'Don't you know that I am the rightful owner of Captain Bolton's property? Haven't you come here for the express purpose of telling me what you know of him?'

'Not I, sir: I know nothing about such a person. I came here to find out my brother's children.'

'Pshaw, old man, what are your brother's children to me? Don't you know, then, anything of Captain Thomas Bolton of the Royal Marines?'

'Not I, sir.'

'Then what did you come here for, fellow?'

'Softly, softly, Alfred,' Susan gently interposed; 'respect the gray hairs of this poor man: either he or you are under some mistake in this matter.'

The sailor turned to her with an expression of deep gratitude. 'Why, ma'am,' he hesitatingly said, 'I didn't say who I was at first, because I wanted to know whether I'd found the right person; but I'm pretty sure now.'

'Who are you then?' Bolton almost fiercely asked.

'Well, sir, I ain't ashamed to own my name, though I am poor, and have only one leg and a stump to carry me. I assure you I've never disgraced my kin, whether they own me or not.'

'Who are you, old man?' Bolton again vociferated.

'Why, sir, I'm Thomas Bolton.'

'Thomas Bolton!'

'Yes, sir; I am the youngest boy, who ran away from home—the brother of your father, sir.'

''Tis a falsehood!' cried the young man, stamping his foot furiously on the ground. 'You've been sent here by those knaves of executors.'

Again Susan interposed, entreating that her husband would listen calmly to what the old man had to say.

'I've nothing else to say, ma'am,' he rejoined. 'If your husband won't believe me, but turns his back upon his nearest kin, why, I'll take myself off, that's all. It shan't be said that Tom Bolton ever cringed for a meal.'

'You shall not go. I'll have you taken up as an impostor. I'll sift this foul concern to the bottom.'

'Taken up?—foul concern? I really don't know what you mean, sir. I ask for nothing, if you don't think proper to own me as your uncle—only I'm a little disappointed.'

There was such an air of truthfulness, and so much simplicity in the aspect and manner of the old man, that Susan felt at once convinced that his statements were correct. She dared not, however, say this to her husband in his present irritated state of mind; but drawing him aside, ventured to suggest that he should detain the sailor by gentle means till the return of the attorney, who, she said, would, by a few questions, soon discover whether it was as he suspected.

Bolton having, from the decision of his own judgment, some fears lest his humble guest should be able to prove his identity, listened to her counsel. If his cause were indeed hopeless, he had no wish to involve himself in any further law expenses. Therefore bidding the old man reseat himself, and take the refreshment which was placed before him, he paced up and down the room with impatient yet less angry gestures.

It was not, however, till Susan had earnestly entreated and whispered an apology for her husband's harsh language, that the old man would comply with the request. But he could not resist her pleadings; and in a few minutes he had the children about his knees, begging him to tell them some story of the sea.

'I should very much like to be a sailor,' exclaimed the eldest boy.

A speaking glance from the mother followed this speech. It was a glance which said, if you regard my feelings, encourage not this wish. The old man read in a moment the expression of her moist eye; and sympathy, or it might be the recollection of his own gentle mother, caused a glistening drop to roll down his sunburnt and furrowed cheek.

'Ah, that is just what I thought, my fine fellow, when I was your age,' he returned, drawing the boy closer to

his side; 'and when my father and mother said I should not go, I was wicked enough to say I would, and then to run away from home. But I've often wished I hadn't done it. I soon got tired of the hard work and the hard fare; and I was frightened when the wind tossed the ship about, and I had to climb up the rigging and take down the sails: and then I often cried for my dear happy home and my good father and mother; and I wanted to play at my old games with my brothers and sisters; but 'twas *too late!*'

The child looked thoughtful, the mother grateful, and the old man, with evident emotion, went on: 'Learn a lesson from me, my little lad,' he said. 'If you wish to be a happy man, don't be a disobedient, bad boy. I've *seemed* as happy, and laughed as loud, as any of my shipmates, but I wasn't happy none the more for that. I used to think of my poor mother, for I knew she'd cry every time she heard the wind roar; and I'd have gone back to her, but they took care I should not leave the ship. So I never saw her again; for when I was a man, and got leave to visit my native town, she was dead, she and my father too; and my brothers and sisters were all gone to live no one knew where, so I was left *alone*. Oh, I was bitterly sorry that I ever left them; and here I am, in my old age, lame and homeless, and without a relation to own me.'

The conversation was here interrupted by the reappearance of the attorney. He entered with an aspect which told of disappointment, ere his lips communicated a word. 'It's all over with us!' Bolton muttered, being by this time quite convinced of the old man's identity. He drew the man of business into an adjoining apartment, and there received the corroboration of his worst fears.

The total blight of his lofty expectations had a worse

effect on the mind of Alfred Bolton than even the hope of wealth had produced. His habits of idleness and intemperance grew more fixed; his temper became morose and even fierce, insomuch that his gentle wife trembled in his presence; and his children fled from him with dread. Susan's relatives, justly indignant at the treatment she received, would have assisted her and the children, if they could have induced her to leave him; but bad as he was, her heart clung to him with affection, which had been too long and too ardently cherished to be extinguished even by his brutality. Thus year after year passed away; but the constitution of the young man, which was naturally delicate, could not bear up against the poisonous effects of a continuous course of intoxication. He fell a victim to that ruinous vice which has slain its thousands and tens of thousands; and his wife was left a widow, his children fatherless.

Widely different was the career of the younger Bolton, and consequently the fate of his family. His strict integrity and undeviating good conduct won the respect and confidence of his employers, and he was raised, step by step, into more important and more lucrative situations, until he became a junior partner in the firm. A few years subsequently, the elder merchants, growing fatigued with the cares of business, retired, and left the whole concern in his hands. The change in their circumstances did not, however, call forth any undue elation on the part of either Francis Bolton or his amiable wife. They had a commodious and well-furnished home, instead of the humble second floor with which they had commenced their married life; a well-spread board, and all the comfort and conveniences which money can so readily procure; but there was no vain display—no attempt to vie with persons of rank and fashion—no affectation of

their manners and amusements. Mr Bolton was known as an open-hearted, generous, and affable individual, and his wife as a gentle, unostentatious matron, who had ever a smile for a friend, and a guinea for an object of charity. None spoke of their sumptuous dinners, their elegant soirees, or their splendid equipage; to be respected and beloved was the guerdon they desired, and this they freely received.

The sequel of poor Susan's fate is sad to relate. A life of extreme mental and bodily suffering could scarcely be a long life. She died prematurely—one of the many innocent victims of vice—but not hopelessly; for her last days were cheered by seeing her boys under the protecting care of her excellent brother-in-law, and by the kind assurances of Letitia Bolton that her daughter should, at her death, be received into their family as one of her own children.

BLIND WALTER.

# BLIND WALTER.

YOU are all doubtless aware that Greenwich may be reached both by railway and steamer ; and if you were there a few years ago you might have remarked, near the steamboat pier, the hero of this narrative. He was then a pale slight youth of sixteen, good-looking, but with that peculiar expression of countenance —half-resignation, half-anxiety—which belongs to the blind. He was quite blind—stone-blind, and had been so from his birth. He had for about two years played the fiddle daily at the corner of a certain street. Every morning he was brought to his post by an old woman with whom he lodged, or sometimes by a little girl, her grandchild, who also brought his dinner at one o'clock, and fetched him home to tea at six. He never asked for money ; but at his feet lay a small basket, into which halfpence poured pretty freely. There was a quiet, uncomplaining manner about him ; he was so neat and clean, that in the neighbourhood he was a favourite, and all strangers admired him. But what was curious and pleasant to see was the respect shewn him by all sailors, watermen, and old college-men. Though he could not

see, they always touched their hats to him, and said 'Sir' when they wished him good-morning or good-evening. But then Blind Walter was the son of a captain in the royal navy, who had left him without a father at six years old. He had had a mother, but she was what is rarely found in this world, as I daresay you all know—a bad mother; and that is the worst thing that can fall to the lot of a child. She was not what the world calls wicked, but she was so really. She neglected her blind boy; she let him pick up his education how he could; and but for the kindness of an old musician, who took a fancy to him, and when his mother was out fetched him to his house, he would have known nothing.

The musician was a poor old Italian, a gentleman in habits and feelings; and he taught the boy to speak Italian, to be tidy and clean, and to play the violin. Walter became passionately fond of music, which, when his mother made the discovery, rather warmed her feelings towards her child. She had him more neatly dressed than before, and took him wherever she went as a prodigy. Walter, who was an intelligent and pleasing lad, was universally liked. He was petted and taken notice of, and soon acquired the manners of the society to which he was now introduced. When he fell into other circumstances he never lost his graceful manners, his soft tone of voice—the surest marks of good-breeding and good company; and he gained largely by it. But his fall was sudden and unexpected. His mother, the portionless daughter of poor, proud people of good family, whom Walter's father had married for her beauty, died deeply in debt; and the poor boy found himself alone in the world with nothing but his violin, saved from the creditors with much difficulty. They had been two years in Greenwich when this happened; and the father

having been much liked by his crew—some of whom were now in Greenwich Hospital—these old pensioners held council. They would have liked to send the boy, now their child, to sea, but his blindness was a serious drawback : they then advised him to try his fortune with the violin, and Walter who had no other friends—his father having been an orphan, protected by one now dead—followed their kind advice. His first day's trial was wondrous in its result : all the college-men came by quietly without saying a word, and threw in their half-pence ; and Walter Arnott thanked God in his heart, while he thought gratefully of the poor Italian musician, some time dead, who had been the instrument of Providence in giving him the means of earning his livelihood. He took a neat, clean, but cheap room in the house of an aged widow, with an orphan grandchild, a girl of thirteen years old ; and after paying his way, giving little presents to Alice, and keeping himself in decent clothes and clean linen, put the rest by in the savings-bank in the name of a clerk in the Hospital, who regularly gave him two-pence every week out of affection to the memory of his father. Scarcely any of those who had been friends of Mrs Arnott's ever noticed Walter, except to give him a sixpence, in a patronising way ; but Walter wanted not their aid. He was independent—he was happy.

He seldom went out in the evening. He would get Alice to read to him books which a friend purchased for him—chiefly naval histories and tales, and lives of celebrated musicians and emperors. He did not, however, forget what was useful to her, and their education went on together with wonderful success. Alice was soon passionately fond of reading ; and as no occupation is at the same time so pleasing and useful, if you avoid bad books—the worst poison on earth—their evenings were

delightful. Neither did Walter neglect his Italian; he pronounced and spoke it well. He bought a grammar, dictionary, and some Italian books, and by dint of perseverance soon trained Alice to study with him. The old grandmother left them to their own course: she already looked on Walter as the future husband of her child, though he solemnly and firmly declared that he would never be a burden to any woman, if one could be found generous enough to marry the blind fiddler.

About two years had passed, and Walter was between eighteen and nineteen, while Alice was a pretty girl of fifteen. The blind youth had learned to read and to write. He had made remarkable progress too in music, and began to be asked to go to balls, and even concerts. He had a beautiful collection of violins, once the idols of the poor Italian, and this was greatly in his favour. One afternoon he was playing some exquisite piece of Italian music to a silent crowd, when a youth about his own age, in the dress of a midshipman, pushed forward, and stood with a blank and astonished air gazing at him. Presently Walter finished; and the crowd, after showering halfpence upon him moved away. But the midshipman remained.

'Walter Arnott!' exclaimed he in tones of deep astonishment.

'Ah, Frank Prescott,' cried the blind youth with genuine satisfaction. 'Is that you? How kind to notice me now!'

'Notice you now! What! the son of the former captain of our ship! Good Heaven, this is shameful—this is dreadful!'

'Not at all: I am very happy—I could not be more so,' replied Walter gently.

'Nonsense; you could and shall. Just put your

fiddle under your arm, and come and dine with me at the *Greyhound.* No denial. I must tell you my story and you must tell me yours. I wanted a friend in Greenwich : I've found one.'

Walter could not resist such hearty kindness ; and after bargaining that they should call at his home, that he might leave his fiddle, and have thus an excuse for explaining his departure from his post, they walked arm-in-arm up the town. A hearty greeting did the middy get from every sailor and invalid he met. Every one was pleased to see the blind fiddler taken notice of, and Alice was quite proud when, handing her his violin, Walter told where he was going. The middy ordered a very good dinner, after which he informed the young musician that he had an uncle in Greenwich whose daughter he was very much in love with ; that being poor, with very small prospects, he concealed his affection from his uncle, who wished his cousin Gertrude to marry some one her equal in point of fortune. To Gertrude he had not spoken distinctly—he was too young for that ; but he was sure she responded to his affection. He was now, however, about to leave England on a three years' cruise, and he was in a state of great uneasiness of mind. He knew not what might happen in the interval. He could not write to the young lady, as he knew she would decline carrying on a clandestine correspondence—and he loved her the more for her delicacy. But still he wanted some friend to give him news of her, and her news of him. Blind Walter readily volunteered to do this by the hand of Alice, if he could at any time pick up intelligence of interest. But Frank Prescott had a better plan than that—he would get his uncle and cousin to patronise him : next evening there was to be a quiet dance, and he must come and play. And Walter did so, and the

evening was twice as pleasant as it otherwise would have been. The blind musician entered into the spirit of the affair; played as long and as often as they liked; was a general favourite with the ladies, especially with Gertrude Prescott; and pleased everybody so much with his playing, that he henceforth found his engagements multiply.

From that day he abandoned his station in the street: he played at evening-parties, he gave lessons, and all without neglecting his education or that of Alice. During the stay of Frank Prescott the young people were inseparable; the midshipman was delighted with his old acquaintance, and they parted attached friends.

Blind Walter actually loved Frank, for with him kindness was irresistible. There are natures which cannot resist the influence of affection, who will love a person who gives them a flower, a word, a look; and Walter was one of those. When Frank was gone, he transferred his affection to Frank's future wife, without forgetting his dear Alice. Miss Prescott came often to see them; and when she found that the young girl was a good Italian scholar, asked her home, and took lessons of her. Proud indeed now was Alice of having studied and read, for Walter was pleased, and she found a sincere friend in Gertrude.

Things went on in this way for nearly two years, when Gertrude reached the age of twenty. Suitors now came round in earnest, and Mr Prescott desired Gertrude to choose among the several competitors. But she could not make up her mind, she said—not daring to avow her affection for Frank. But her father insisted, and himself selected a Mr Charles Williams, a rising young barrister with brilliant prospects. One evening Gertrude was very unhappy: Alice was by her side, and Blind Walter was

hourly expected. Miss Prescott was very dull and low-spirited, and nothing her humble friend could do could rouse her.

'What is the matter?' asked Alice earnestly, after vainly endeavouring to get on with her Italian lesson.

'Papa insists upon my receiving the addresses of Mr Charles Williams. He is going to ask him to dinner on Monday next. What am I to do?'

'But, my dear Miss Prescott,' said Alice earnestly, 'why not avow your affection for your cousin Frank?'

'Because my father long ago forbade me to think of him. Frank has nothing but his profession, which is not lucrative enough to please my dear papa.'

'I don't know what to advise. I wish Walter were here; he would tell us.'

At this very instant the door opened, and the servant announced in a loud voice: 'Sir Walter Arnott!'

They rose astounded, and in walked Blind Walter, leaving at the door a servant in rich livery, who had led him up. He was fashionably dressed, but his smile was as gentle and sweet as ever. He advanced to a sofa, took the hands of his two friends, and sat down between them. His story was very brief. Seven lives which had stood between his father and a baronetcy of twenty-five thousand pounds a year had all lapsed, save one, long ago; and about six months previously the last survivor, a descendant of his grandfather's eldest brother, had died without issue and intestate. A week before that evening, the solicitor traced Blind Walter as the next of kin. He had kept his secret until all was settled, passing off the solicitor as a pupil; and this day he had been put in possession of his property, the lord-chancellor having appointed trustees for the three months he wanted of being of age.

'But you seem in trouble,' said Sir Walter when he

had told his story—for he always observed the slightest difference in the intonation of voice.

Alice, who was overwhelmed at what she had heard, timidly explained.

'I see only one remedy,' observed the blind young baronet after some reflection.

'And what is that?' asked Gertrude anxiously.

'You must let me court you for the next four months. I have this day—for I am influential now—sent Frank his leave of absence for twelve months, begging him to come home. It seems I am indispensable in a certain county where ministers want to keep their supporters in, and so they can refuse me nothing.'

'Good Sir Walter!' exclaimed Gertrude and Alice.

'Blind Walter still with you! But listen: until Frank returns, I will keep off all suitors. Say nothing, only let us always be together—us three, I mean,' said the quick-eared young man as he caught the sound of a little sigh from Alice; 'and your father will give me six months at least to think of it. But, my dear friends, listen to me. I must marry now. In whom else, now that I have such heavy trusts and duties, can I confide than a wife? Twenty-five thousand a year wants somebody who can see to attend to it. Had I remained poor, no woman should ever have had such a burden imposed on her. There is but one girl in the world who ever can be my wife. While I was poor, I studiously concealed my feelings; but now, dear Alice, my riches, my rank, are vain indeed if you refuse to be mine when Frank returns.'

'I, Sir Walter!' cried the amazed girl, pale with a feeling more like alarm than anything else—'a poor girl like me! What will your rich friends say?'

'Alice, you have for five years been my devoted sister;

we have studied together, thought together, learned together : let us now, if your heart can reconcile itself to a blind husband, love one another. I am not fit to be alone; but if you will not be the poor blind boy's guardian angel, I must trust myself to some hired servant.'

'Walter ! Walter !' cried Alice, sobbing aloud, 'I have always loved you dearly, and, had you remained poor, had always meant to beg you to take me for your wife—your guide ; and you would ; for when grandmother dies I shall be alone : but now I dare not accept'——

'You have accepted !' exclaimed Gertrude, placing their hands one in another ; and as Alice could not speak, the betrothal was over. After a few minutes' silence they discussed their plans, and were in the midst of them when Mr Prescott entered hurriedly.

'Sir Walter, I am proud to congratulate you. I am highly honoured by your making your first call here.'

'I have to apologise for taking the liberty of coming so unceremoniously. Hours suited to the musician become perhaps unsuitable now.'

'Sir Walter, pray consider my house your own,' said Mr Prescott warmly, half from genuine pleasure at the good-luck of one he liked, as all did, and half from the reflection that twenty-five thousand pounds a year, even with a blind baronet, was perhaps a very splendid prospect for his daughter.

From that day all suitors withdrew before the young baronet. Everybody looked upon the affair as settled. Miss Gertrude and he, with Alice for a companion, drove out together, and went to parties together ; and what other result could be expected ? But not one word did any of the two say which could be construed into deceit. Mr Prescott allowed matters to take their course, not even sounding Gertrude on the point he had at heart.

One morning Sir Walter called formally upon Mr Prescott, and demanded the honour of an interview. That gentleman bowed his young friend into the drawing-room, and his heart beating rather more quickly than usual, he sat down after handing Walter to a chair.

'What, my dear Sir Walter,' said Mr Prescott blandly, 'can I do for you?'

'I come,' said Walter, with almost the only trace of sarcasm on his face which ever appeared there—'I come to speak to you of your daughter, Miss Gertrude.'

'Indeed!' exclaimed Mr Prescott, with a very harmless attempt at playing astonishment in his tone.

'You will be very much surprised, my dear sir,' said blind Walter a little timidly, 'at what I am going to say.'

'Perhaps not,' said papa knowingly; 'I fancy'——

'You have fancied wrong, Mr Prescott,' said Walter firmly, 'if you have supposed that I have courted your daughter on my own account. Listen to me first, and be angry if you will afterwards. I have courted for another—for a young man who loves her, and whom she loves—a lieutenant in the navy, on whom I settle, the day he marries, the sum of twenty thousand pounds, which I have raised by felling timber, which was far too luxuriant on my estates.'

'But!' exclaimed Mr Prescott, quite mollified at the words 'twenty thousand pounds,' and who was, besides, a very good-hearted man at bottom—'but who is the gentleman?'

'Your nephew Frank,' said Walter moving to the door as readily as if he could see.

Mr Prescott burst into a laugh: he saw at once the whole conspiracy; and when the next minute Frank and Gertrude entered, and he tried to scold, it was of no avail: he was obliged to laugh anew, and when Frank

went over every detail of the plot from beginning to end, he laughed still more. A happy dinner-party was there that day at Mr Prescott's table. There were Frank and Sir Walter, and Gertrude and Alice. Frank demurred a little at the generosity of his friend, but Walter asked what his riches came for but to make his friends happy; and the sailor was obliged to yield, as Mr Prescott declared that his consent was given only conditionally.

And they were all four married a month later. Frank retired from the service at the request of Gertrude, and accompanied Sir Walter and Lady Arnott on a tour into Italy, where the latter wished to improve their knowledge of the language, while Sir Walter felt genuine joy on visiting the land of the poor musician to whom he owed everything. Frank, on their return, settled near the baronet's estates, and is still as devoted a friend as man can wish for; and Alice, whose grandmother still lives in a beautiful cottage built for her in the Park, is an ornament to the class to which she has risen. Her mind refined by education, study, and thought, she is quite equal to her station; and oh! what joy is hers now, when the oculists have declared that in time Sir Walter may be brought to see. She has children; but her blind husband is her first child. She is ever by his side; she watches his footsteps, his very glance; and no steward ever was so careful of his master's wealth as Alice is of her husband.

# THE SCULPTOR OF BRUGES.

ABOUT the middle of the sixteenth century, there was not an artist in the Netherlands whose fame had spread wider than that of Messer Andrea, the sculptor of Bruges. His father had come from Italy, and settled in Flanders, where he lived and struggled, an ardent and enthusiastic artist, whose genius cast just sufficient light to shew him his own defects. This love of the beautiful was the sole inheritance he left his son. But Andrea's northern birth and education had, to a certain extent, qualified his Italian descent, so that to his father's ardent nature he added a steady perseverance, without which all the genius in the world is but as a meteor of a moment.

The branch of art that Andrea followed was wood-sculpture, in which, by his wonderful skill, he surpassed all his contemporaries. In our day, it is impossible, from the few relics that remain, to know the perfection to which our ancestors of the middle ages carried this beautiful style of art; when Gothic saints and Madonnas looked down from their niches in cathedrals, though the names of the unknown artists who carved these beautiful

heads and graceful draperies were forgotten, even before the frail material in which they worked had lost its freshness.

The sculptor of Bruges was one of these now-forgotten artists; and yet an artist he was, in the highest sense of the word. He lived and moved among beautiful forms and ideas; they influenced his character, and refined his mind, yet did not make him unfit for association with the world. Riches and honour came with his fame, until he stood high in the regard of his fellow-citizens; and the son of the poor Italian student was at last deemed worthy to wed one who had long been the object of an almost hopeless love, a daughter of one of the highest families in Bruges. This union could not but be a happy one; and Andrea and his wife slowly advanced towards middle age, feeling that their present bliss had not belied the promise of their youth. Still, there were a few bitter drops in their cup: the husband and wife saw several of their children drop off one by one, until all that remained were two boys and a daughter—the lovely little fair-haired Gertrude, who was her father's darling. Nevertheless, these were sufficient to make the sculptor's home cheerful, and the lost brothers and sisters were hardly missed.

At the time when our story begins, Andrea had finished his latest work. It was a group of angels, carved in wood, to adorn the church of Bruges. The burghers crowded to gaze upon and admire the work of their fellow-citizen, of whom they were so justly proud. It was indeed a beautiful specimen of the ancient Gothic style, such as one meets with sometimes even now in old churches, where the hand of innovation has not reached. Three angels formed the group, one kneeling with raised eyes and humbly-folded hands, while the other's stretched-

out arms were lifted upwards in rapturous adoration; and the third, looking down on the worshippers below, pointed towards heaven. The perfect beauty of expression, the grand, yet simple masses of drapery, falling in broad folds, which are the characteristics of this style, won universal praise. The artist stood by, in pleasure, not unmingled with honest pride, when many a hand shook his own in friendly congratulation, and many an eye, made humbler by rank and distance, looked at him admiringly.

In all the pleased assembly there was but one dissentient voice, and that was from a brother artist and rival of Andrea. Melchior Kunst was one of those dark and unquiet spirits who seem to cast a shadow wherever they go. He was a man of great talent, noble to look at, and at times most fascinating in manner, and yet no one loved him. There appeared to be an atmosphere of gloom and distrust about him, which made his fellowmen shrink from him. Even now, all instinctively made way for him, and Melchior strode on until he stood opposite the group. He folded his arms, and looked at it fixedly from under his dark brows. Then he addressed the artist, who stood at a little distance.

'Doubtless you think this very fine, Messer Andrea?'

'It is not what *I* think of it, but the judgment which the world puts on my work, that is of consequence,' answered Andrea calmly.

'And you never saw this design before?'

'Certainly not; it is my own.'

'Indeed!' said Melchior with that quiet sneer which is so galling, sitting on his curved lips—the handsomest feature of his very handsome face. 'Indeed! And so you never go into another's studio, and copy limbs, and attitude, and design, as you have here stolen from me?'

'It is not true,' said Andrea, with difficulty restraining his passion.

'I tell you it is,' cried his opponent. 'Look, gentlemen, brother artists; look! this figure is mine—my own design; and here I execute my will upon what is my own!' and he drew a hatchet from under his cloak, and before the wonder-stricken spectators could interfere, he severed one of the upraised hands of the nearest figure.

Andrea was stung to the quick by this mutilation of his work; all his Italian blood was roused within him: on a sudden impulse he rushed upon Kunst with the fury of a tiger at bay. Those around interfered; but it was needless, for Andrea's well-constituted mind had already got the better of his momentary rage, and he stood pale, but self-possessed, gazing alternately at his adversary and at his own despoiled work.

'Melchior Kunst,' said he at last, 'you think you have done me a great injury; and so you have, but not an irreparable one. I will not revenge myself now, but you will be sorry for it some time.'

A loud laugh from Kunst made the sculptor once more clench his hands, while the bright red mounted to his brow; but he said no more, and after Melchior's departure, he too left the hall with some friends, who were stricken dumb by this untoward event.

It was late in the evening when Andrea returned towards his own home. He walked slowly along by the side of the dark and gloomy canal, which the setting light of the young moon only made more solemn and fearful. Thick ivy-hung walls, even in the daytime, cast a heavy shadow on the water; and now it looked like some dark abyss, which no man could fathom. Here and there some pale solitary ray of moonlight pierced through the branches of the acacias that overhung the opposite

side, seeming like a bright arrow flashing through the darkness.

Andrea's heart was very heavy. His triumph had ended in pain: disappointment not only at the injury done to his work, but at the unjust accusation of Melchior Kunst. Andrea knew how ready are the suspicions of the world when once aroused; and he fancied that already cold and doubtful eyes examined his group with less favour than heretofore. And besides, the sudden ebullition of anger to which he had been goaded left a weight behind, both bodily and mental; for with men of Andrea's gentle and not easily-roused temperament, such excitement ever causes a painful reaction.

The sculptor walked on quickly amidst the gathering darkness of the night, for the moon had now set. He fancied now and then that he heard stealthy footsteps at a distance behind him; and perhaps this made him unconsciously urge his pace. Andrea was no coward, but it was a lonely place by the water-side, and he was unarmed. Still, as the footsteps approached no nearer, he reproached himself for yielding to the delusion of an imagination heated by the events of the day. All at once Andrea heard distinctly a plunge in the water of some heavy body. His first idea was, that some unfortunate had thus ended his life and his miseries; but the sound was so distant, that he was uncertain. He retraced his steps; but there was nothing to justify his previous thought. The canal flowed on, silent and dark as before: not a struggle, not a groan, not a cry rose up from its gloomy depths. It could have been only a heavy stone, which had fallen from the old dilapidated wall into the waters beneath. Andrea felt sure of this, and went on his way until he reached his home—a home where, since he left, danger and anxiety had entered.

Three days after this, two armed officers of justice made their appearance in the dwelling of the sculptor of Bruges. They came to take prisoner the master of the house, accused of the crime of murder. From the day of the contest in the hall, Melchior Kunst had never been seen until that morning, when his lifeless body had floated up from the bed of the canal into the very market-place, a fearful spectre among living men. Then one of the horror-stricken by-standers remembered that on the same night of their quarrel he had seen Messer Andrea pass by the way that led along the canal, and that not long after Melchior Kunst also followed. Another man, who lived near, had heard a plunge in the water, but thought it was only his own dog, who often at night swam across the canal. A third had met Messer Andrea beside the canal also, but had seen no other man. This was sufficient evidence to convict the unfortunate artist.

The officers found their prisoner alone. He was sitting with his head buried in his hands, and hardly moved at their entrance. One of them laid his hand on the sculptor's shoulder, and claimed him as a prisoner.

Andrea looked up with a face so listless, so vacant, so deadly pale, that the officer started, and unconsciously let go his hold.

'A prisoner!' said Andrea, without making an effort to move. 'What have I done? Who accuses me?'

The officer was a man of kindly nature, who had known Messer Andrea in former times. He gently and respectfully explained his errand; but had to repeat it several times before Andrea comprehended him. It seemed that some heavy cloud darkened his faculties. At last he understood the whole.

'So they accuse me of being a murderer—an assassin?' said he, rising, while a shiver ran through his frame.

Then addressing the first officer: 'You were a good man once—follow me.' The other hesitated. 'You need not fear,' continued Andrea; 'I am unarmed—I have no thought of escaping from justice.'

The man followed his prisoner until they came to a darkened room; it was the chamber of death. On the bed lay the pale and shrouded form of a woman. Very beautiful she must have been, and her beauty had scarcely passed its maturity. No long illness had taken away the roundness of health from her face, so that even in death she looked lovely as a marble statue. The long dark lashes rested on her cheek, and a few locks of jet-black hair, escaping from the fillet that bound her head, gave a lifelike air to her repose. By her side lay an infant—a flower of an hour—whose little soul had come from Heaven at sunrise, and returned thither at sunset. They were the wife and child of Andrea.

The sculptor pointed to the dead. 'Look there,' he said, 'and say if I am likely to have revenged any trifling insult—if I am likely to have been a murderer!' His voice grew hoarse; he stretched his arms towards the body of his wife, and then fell to the earth in strong convulsions.

Andrea, during nearly the whole time that elapsed between his apprehension and trial, was dead to the consciousness of his misery. A low fever enfeebled all his senses, and reduced his outward form to the appearance of an old man. His friends—for he had still many—took both his sons in their charge. It was well they did, for the father seemed to have lost all remembrance even of their existence. When they visited him, he took not the least notice of them; so the children were at last wisely sent far away from the scene of disgrace and suffering. But with Gertrude the father would not part. She was

a sweet little creature, the image of her mother in feature and expression, but her complexion resembled her father. Her eyes were of that deep violet hue which is seldom seen beyond childhood—so dark, that a careless observer would call them black. Gertrude's hair was of that colour which the old masters often gave to heads of Christ and of the Virgin—a mingling of warm brown and reddish gold tints, which the uninitiated might call red, but which painters know to be the most beautiful of all shades. It gave to sweet Gertrude the appearance of an angel, for in the sunshine it looked like a coronet of golden light around her head. If ever human form seemed the visible embodiment of a perfect soul, it was this child's. We have lingered over the picture of her, partly because we love to think of beauty, and partly because such descriptions always give vividness to events that are long gone by.

The first evidence that Andrea gave of returning consciousness to things around him, was in recognising his little daughter, and calling her by her name. It was her mother's also; and perhaps that, aided by the strong resemblance, was a comfort to the widowed husband. He began to talk coherently, first with Gertrude, and then with others who came to see him; and by degrees his mind and body gathered strength, so that he was able to think of his defence against the terrible crime laid to his charge. This was a momentous thing, for the proofs were all against him, and Andrea could bring no evidence in his favour, save his own explanation of what had happened on his way homewards that fatal day, and the irreproachable character he had borne all his life.

At last the sculptor of Bruges was brought from his prison to the judgment-hall where he was to be tried. He seemed to himself like one risen from the grave, and

indeed so he appeared to those about him. Andrea had been a strong, powerful, noble-looking man, but now all his flesh had shrunk away, and his height only made him appear more shadowy. Dark circles were round his eyes, and his face bore an unvaried sallow hue. Nevertheless, his mien was firm and composed; no one could look at him, and doubt for a moment his innocence. Andrea's little daughter stood by his side: one might have likened her to a flower growing close beside a tomb. Gertrude had become accustomed to the change in her father's looks, and the shocked and anxious gaze of all around struck her with alarm. She crept closer to him, never taking her eyes from his face.

The trial proceeded. All was against Andrea: even the words he had uttered before Melchior left the hall were brought in judgment against him: they had sounded like a threat. None that had known Andrea doubted in their own hearts that he was a guiltless man, but the circumstantial evidence was too strong to be gainsayed by the law. He was found guilty of the assassination of Melchior Kunst; and Andrea—the gentle, upright man, who had never lifted a hand against a fellow-creature, save in that one evil hour when he was driven to passion by Melchior Kunst—was removed from the hall of justice with the stain of murder on his name.

Condemnation was deferred for a short space, for the sake of the hitherto unsullied character of the criminal. In those days the hand of law was often tampered with, and never was it with greater show of justice than in this instance. Andrea's great talents, and the many friends who warmly protested how incapable he was of such a crime, interposed in his behalf. They succeeded in obtaining only a suspension of the sentence for a few months, that some chance might elicit the truth which so

many doubted. But in the meantime the sculptor was ordered to execute some work of art to adorn the Palais de Justice at Bruges, where he had been tried. For this purpose he was brought from his cell, and confined in the hall which had witnessed his trial.

It was a large gloomy-looking chamber, so dimly lighted from without, that even at mid-day the dark shadows in the corners of the room looked like night. An immense hearth, on which lay a few fagots, was the only cheerful object, but even that light and warmth did not reach beyond the immediate vicinity of the fire. There was no furniture in the room, save one small table in the centre, a bench, and a straw couch in the gloomiest corner. It was a place in which one would instinctively shrink from looking behind, and where the sound of one's own footsteps would sound hollow and full of dread, as if something fearful were following.

Andrea and his daughter heard the heavy door close, and they were alone in the hall. The little girl led her father to the bench beside the hearth, and then sat down at his feet, holding his hands fast in hers. She dared not look anywhere but at the bright fire and at her father's face; even the shadows that the flames cast on the ceiling made her start sometimes. Gertrude had been accustomed to a prison, for she had never left her father, except when taken home at night, to return next morning—but this place seemed gloomier than any before.

Andrea had no hope. His life had been free from any very heavy sorrows, and the first that came, so fearful as they were, overwhelmed him. His sole idea now was, to employ the short remnant of his life in executing some memorial of his talents to leave behind him, that, when time had removed the shadow from his fame, his children might have no reason to blush for their father. He

turned again to his long-cherished occupation. For a while this gave him sensations almost amounting to pleasure. His step became lighter, and his countenance lost somewhat of the settled melancholy. He almost forgot his sorrows, his blighted name, his impending doom, in the exercise of his beloved art. He would cease from his work, look at the beautiful image which had risen to life under his hand, and murmur to himself: 'What man will say that the hand of an assassin has done this? that the brain which formed this idea of beauty could plan a murder?'

And by degrees the influence of his beautiful art in some measure soothed the mind of the sorrow-stricken man. His desolate prison became cheerful with the graceful forms which it contained, and Gertrude moved among the whole like a beautiful spirit. If ever the sculptor clung to hope and life, it was when he looked at his darling child, and at the more imperishable offspring of his genius.

At last Andrea's work drew nigh to a close: the sculpture was finished. Then it was that the enthusiasm which had sustained him faded away, and the artist's soul sank within him. He gave the last touches to his beautiful work—he knew he could do no more—and then went and sat in dumb stillness, in a stupor of grief and despair. Gertrude clung round him in affection mingled with fear, but he did not speak to her or embrace her.

'Father, dear father, are you tired? Are you angry with your little girl?' and the child stood on tiptoe, trying to remove the hands which covered his face.

Andrea seemed hardly conscious of her presence, but repeated every now and then in a low tone: 'I have done my work—I have no hope—now let me die.'

The terrified child, who had been all along kept in

ignorance of her father's doom, began to weep, but her tears were interrupted by the entrance of the magistrates of Bruges. They came to view the finished work of the artist. High as Andrea's reputation had been, they did not expect so beautiful a creation as that which now met their eyes. They looked upon it in silence, and then turned to the artist, who wan and haggard, without a single ray of hope illuminating his pale features, stood behind his judges. One of them, an old man, was melted even to tears. Forgetting the dignity of office, the magistrate took hold of the criminal's hand and led him to a seat.

'You must not stand, Messer Andrea; you are not yet strong,' said he compassionately. 'Sit and rest while we examine your beautiful work.'

The sculptor obeyed without a word: he was passive as a child. Little Gertrude, who had shrunk away at the sight of strangers, came and stood silently behind her father, taking fast hold of his garments. The two magistrates inspected the sculpture, and could not restrain their admiration. The eye of the unfortunate artist brightened for a moment at their warm praise, but immediately his face returned to its accustomed melancholy.

'It is all in vain,' he answered; 'you cannot make men forget the past—you cannot take the shadow from the name of my children—you cannot give their father life.'

The magistrates looked at one another, and the elder one spoke.

'There is hope still, Messer Andrea; have you courage to hear it?'

The artist started up, and raised his thin form to its full height. 'Tell me that I am proved innocent, and I will thank God and die.'

'We do not promise quite so much,' said one of the judges, wishing to temper Andrea's violent excitement.

'Only have hope. Many things have been discovered to-day,' continued the aged man whose kindness had first moved Andrea. 'Be calm now; to-morrow we may send you good news.'

The magistrates departed, leaving the poor prisoner with a wildly-throbbing heart, which he vainly endeavoured to still. All that day he sat with Gertrude in his arms, kissing her, fondling her, at times almost weeping over her. To all the questions of the wondering child he only answered: 'To-morrow, love; we may be free to-morrow.'

And when the attendants came to remove Gertrude for the night, he unclasped her arms from round his neck, with the promise that he too would go away with her to-morrow.

'Leave here to-morrow!' cried the happy child. 'Will you, too, leave this gloomy place to-morrow, and return no more?'

'God forbid I should return! No, my child, never more,' answered the father with a shudder.

'And shall we go out together—shall we go to our own home?' pursued Gertrude.

'Yes, dear child,' said Andrea, as he kissed her once more, and set her on the ground from his trembling arms, too weak for even so light a burden. 'Yes, my Gertrude, I shall indeed go home to-morrow.'

He had spoken truth. Soon after daybreak next morning some officers entered the hall, bearing a release for the prisoner, whom the confession of a stranger had proved to be guiltless. Andrea was leaning on the table, his head resting on his arms, and his upturned face raised towards his work. But as they drew nearer, they saw that his countenance was meaningless, and that no life shone in his fixed and open eyes. The sculptor of Bruges was dead—his heart had broken with joy.

# THE LITERARY ASPIRANT.

PIERRE HENRI was the architect of his own fortunes, as the phrase goes; he was considered well to do in the world, and had actually realised, by years of untiring labour and economy, a little fund to draw on in any present emergency, and secure a moderate provision for his old age. Many would have been satisfied with such an achievement, and taken a holiday for the remainder of life; not so Pierre Henri: from principle even more than from habit, his hand still clung as steadily to the trowel and line as when he laid his first foundation-stone. He appreciated the value of such an example to his children; and his greatest ambition was to see them follow in the same track; its ruggedness somewhat smoothed, and its opportunities enlarged, by the advantages afforded through the competence earned so hardly by himself.

When we speak of children, there were only two—a son and daughter. The young girl followed her mother's footsteps in everything good, and, as the daughter of a tradesman, was engaged to be married on some future day to one of the most intelligent and estimable of his work-

men. His son, too, was on the desired road, already skilful in his father's trade, and all that his father's heart could wish. But a change, at first unnoticed, had gradually crept between them. At last, the father's heart began to tremble: his son, the centre of his hopes, seemed about to take a wrong turning—to start on an unknown path, and escape from him for ever.

None but parents can know the sad, mysterious feeling, when the young nestling, reared with so much care, formed and moulded to some cherished plan, takes a flight above and beyond them into some unfamiliar region, upsetting their life-long fabric with its soaring wing—that vague mingling of admiration and sorrow with which they watch the parted one—that trembling hope and doubt with which they let him go, or lure him back. Pierre Henri experienced those feelings in all their acuteness. He had always felt the value of education, and had sought to give his son the best within his reach, trusting to see it yet developed in the higher branches of his trade; but it had the more natural effect of inspiring a taste that 'grew by what it fed on.' Every spare shilling that Jacques could scrape together, found its way to the book-stalls; every year a new plank was added to the parlour shelf, until at last it began to wear the appearance of a little library. His mother groaned at the expensive folly; his father, at the time thus stolen from the workshop; but the one scolded very gently, and the other very seldom, and so the young lad continued to follow his own way.

Pierre Henri tried to shut his eyes: experience had taught him, that authority has the same effect against a fancy that the breeze has against a sail—instead of checking, it urges it on; but Jacques soon perceived this indecision, and took advantage of it. At first, he

had been contented with stolen moments—'library Mondays,' as his father styled them—but by little and little he abandoned the workshop altogether, hung his tools on the hook, and buried himself amidst his waste-papers.

His mother had always blamed Pierre Henri's patience, declaring that the boy all the while was running to destruction ; now, she began to pass from apprehension to despair. His father had tried some friendly hints, of which Jacques at first had taken notice, but by degrees he totally disregarded them. He no longer blushed at leaving the entire burden of the work on his hands ; he did not even seem to feel his neglect ; his conscience was evidently becoming blunted ; and his father felt at last it was high time to speak out, when his intention was anticipated by an unexpected occurrence. For several weeks, Jacques had been more occupied even than usual ; he had written lengthy epistles, and seemed anxiously waiting a reply ; it arrived at last by the carman who brought timber from town for the work. As it was placed in his hand, he could not repress an exclamation ; he opened it hurriedly, glanced at the signature, and instantly ran off to peruse it alone.

Pierre Henri entered at that moment, and his wife, who was standing on the threshold paying the carrier, at once took him aside to relate what had occurred. She could not fathom the mystery, and trembled without well knowing why : she pointed to Jacques, who, with elated countenance and joyful gestures, was reading his letter half aloud at the bottom of the garden—now pausing to examine it more closely, now laughing to himself, now bounding across the strawberry-beds like one possessed. Her husband regarded him with anxious curiosity ; but being accompanied by a new overseer, lately placed over

the works by the chief-engineer, he was obliged to turn silently away, and defer all inquiry to a more convenient hour.

His companion was a young man, in air and manner far superior to the generality of his class, but whose dejected countenance and threadbare clothes sufficiently explained his position; he had evidently been reduced, by some misfortune, from the station for which he had been educated. Touched by his gentleness and evident sadness, Pierre Henri had invited him to share their evening meal; and they now entered the little parlour together. Here Jacques had lately fitted up a painted bookcase, with his handsomest and most valued works. At the unexpected sight M. Ducor seemed surprised, and at once commenced examining the volumes with an air of recognition; at that moment the young lad entered, his face beaming with some inward delight, his very stature heightened. M. Ducor immediately accosted him with some compliment on his collection, and they both felt at once at home on the subject. It was one with which the new overseer especially seemed quite familiar: he had lived in Paris, and had been personally acquainted with several authors; this gained him the young lad's confidence completely, who, during the whole time of supper, talked incessantly of poetry and romance, the guest contenting himself with a quiet remark now and then, or an answer to some eager inquiry. Amidst all his former enthusiasm, his parents had seen nothing like this; his mother would every now and then glance uneasily at her husband, as if to ask him, could it be the commencement of a fever? His father hardly knew what to think, and waited impatiently for some clue to the enigma; but just as the meal had ended, some one called to settle an account. Pierre Henri retired into a little office communicating

with the parlour by a glazed door, and his wife and daughter going to attend their household affairs, the two young men were left to themselves.

Pierre Henri continued entering accounts in his book without noticing their conversation for a time; but by degrees the lowered tone of their voices arrested his attention, and raising a corner of the curtain which screened the glass-door, he looked into the room. There he saw M. Ducor and Jacques, still seated at the table, their elbows resting on it, their figures almost touching, with an air of the greatest intimacy. Jacques was flushed to the very temples, his eyes sparkling like stars. 'It is enough,' he exclaimed: 'I have been too long worried with this tiresome trade; I will follow my destiny, and proceed to Paris at once.'

'To write?' inquired his companion.

'And make my way like so many others,' continued the young lad. 'We no longer live in times when the workman's hand is soldered to his tools—the door is now open to all the world.'

'Which does not prevent many from remaining outside,' remarked the overseer with a sad smile.

'I know that—I know,' returned Jacques impatiently; 'but every one has his own convictions, and I am not without further encouragement: in short, yesterday I might have hesitated; I am decided to-day.'

The overseer did not answer at once; he kept crumbling a morsel of bread which had remained on the table, and appeared lost in thought. Suddenly he raised his head: 'And so you would renounce your present position, said he slowly; 'you would recommence life all alone; a life of which you know nothing, for which nothing has prepared you. You would follow in the train of those who thirst for fortune and renown'——

'And what is to prevent me?' interrupted Jacques, almost angrily.

'My example!' answered M. Ducor; then with much animation, he continued: 'I also thought I had discerned my vocation, and I tried the experiment. Such as you see me now, I have yet written a play, and seen it acted; I have published a book; different journals have eulogised me; I have had, in short, what is called success: for three long years I have frequented the salons of Paris, in misery—and white gloves; I have tried to season my dry bread with the memory of fair words; I have waited until time had worn out my last hope with my last coat'——

'And you were at last obliged to give up?' inquired the boy.

'To become what you see,' replied the overseer. 'This astonishes you—you can hardly believe it; but I can easily shew you proofs. See, here is the announcement of my reception into the Literary Society; here are several autograph letters from the gifted men of our day, not to mention those I have sold for bread; here is a note from the minister of public instruction, announcing a donation of fifty francs, "accorded to my literary merit"—that is the phrase—at once a boon to indigence and a certificate of honour. Ah! here is the letter from which I date all my misfortunes. Look, it is the answer given to the offer of my first manuscript.'

Jacques read the signature aloud—it was that of—— ——. He started as he uttered this celebrated name.

'You may read it all,' continued M. Ducor quietly. 'That letter will make you comprehend why, after receiving it, I no longer hesitated to throw up my employment, and believe that Paris alone was the place for me. I did not then understand that such professions from

literary men are but as the counters used on the stage—none but a simpleton would mistake them for gold.'

Whilst the young man was thus speaking, Jacques continued silently perusing the letter, his colour changing at every line. Suddenly, he uttered an exclamation, fumbled in his pocket, and drawing forth the identical letter he had himself received just before supper, commenced comparing the two in an under-voice. They contained the same commendations, the same professions, expressed with the same enthusiasm. The great poet to whom Jacques had forwarded one of his effusions, as M. Ducor had formerly done, replied in exactly similar terms to both; his brevets of immortality had but one formula, like the certificates of good conduct.

Jacques could not conceal his vexation, and the overseer could not restrain a smile. 'We have been granted the same passport,' he observed with a slightly ironical air: 'I know where mine conducted me; we shall see the result of yours. At a distance those gentlemen pronounce us stars—nearer, we are but empty lamps. The praises we devour as predictions, are deemed mere politeness by them: they return our admiration in this small-change, and flatter individuals to be flattered by all the world. They are, in fact, lawyers who promise to gain a cause, that they may preserve their client. I give you my experience; it is your turn now.'

Jacques continued silent. The two letters lay open before him, his troubled glance wandering from one to the other: his lately triumphant bearing was replaced by a thoughtful and somewhat irritated air, and, after a pause, he commenced questioning the overseer again, though far less confidently than before. In return, he received from his new friend a full detail of his three 'Bohemian' years, as he styled them. It was a long

narrative of disappointment and humiliation. He had lived on hidden sufferings and bankrupt hopes; buttoning his garment to the throat over his misery, ascending from floor to floor till he reached the slates; flying from hunger first, from hungrier creditors at last. The history was so lamentable, and told with so true an accent, that Jacques was visibly affected: still, he struggled against his convictions. If the overseer had not been successful, perhaps the fault lay with himself. Did he equally deserve the praises that had equally encouraged him? Even the experience of his trade could shew him, that it is only by comparing the work we can judge of the relative merits of the workmen. While he thus inwardly reasoned, M. Ducor, evidently following his train of thought, promised to bring him, at his next visit, the volume he had published, at the same moment mentioning its name. The announcement took him by surprise. Jacques instantly recognised it as one of his greatest favourites; in fact, a work that he had regarded as a model, and the writer of which he had often envied. A burst of astonishment and congratulation ensued; but then came the true chill of disappointment: was it possible that such talent—talent that he could hardly hope to rival—was thus miserably stranded? His illusions were cut at the very root, all his plans overturned. He still continued to converse with the young poet, to interrogate him concerning this literary life which had appeared so enchanting; but where he had only dreamed of celebrity, independence, riches, leisure, the poor overseer detailed persecutions, bondage, poverty, ill-requited labour.

Animated by the remembrance of all he had suffered, Ducor spoke with an eloquence that went to the heart of both his listeners—the father as well as the son: his eyes moistened, his voice trembled; and, as he rose to take

leave, he seized the hands of Jacques within his own, and pressing then warmly, he added : 'Reflect on all you would cast away here for an uncertain future there : you have a family to love you ; habits which have become a second nature ; a useful trade, identified with every hour since your childhood ; and all this you would sacrifice to become the dupe of strangers, to adopt customs which must ever constrain you, a mode of life for which you have had no training. And what would you seek in Paris? Happiness? You possess it here. The gratifications of pride? Pray God never to grant them to you. Ah ! this is the malady of our time : every one must acquire a name in print. We grow ashamed of mere handiwork, and on every side the refugees of labour swell the ranks of the disappointed and mistaken. But would you listen to my advice—had I, like you, the happiness of feeling in my arm the power, the strength imparted by accustomed labour, I would remain where Providence had placed me, as much through a proud devotedness as through prudence ; I would place whatever knowledge I had acquired at the service of my working brethren ; I would shew them how intelligence may forward the work of our hands ; I would teach them to discover in intellectual pleasures a recompense for bodily fatigue ; I would help with all my power to elevate their minds, and consecrate my leisure to rendering them similar to myself, instead of feeling isolated among them : there lies our real task. We should not use our education as a back-door through which to desert our companions, but as a ladder by which we may enable them to reach our own level. Think of this, dear friend : at Paris, you would be merely a conscript in an army already officered ; here, you may be the leader of a corps which has no such commander. Believe me, it is better to elevate our class than to abandon

it. We cannot shift our existence like a bachelor's household: in the spot where affection and habit make our home, there is our true safety; and never should we lightly quit the sphere where we have been happy and beloved. The heart should render it sacred for ever.'

As he concluded this appeal, the overseer again shook hands with Jacques, and retired. We may imagine the sensations of his unseen listener behind the curtain; he could hardly restrain himself from rushing after him, to pour out his acknowledgments, his sympathy. Every word had found an echo in the father's heart.

But he passed the night without closing his eyes. His room was separated from his son's by only a slight partition, and he could hear every sigh and every turn on the restless bed. He felt that, in that hour, not only his child's destiny, but that of the whole family, was about to be decided. Were they not all indissolubly linked? Jacques was their present joy, their future hope. All that time could deprive them of was restored in him—their youth, their strength, their very earnings, their most cherished plans. And he, what was to become of him amidst perils and trials such as the overseer had described? Thus spoke the father's heart; but the more he reflected, the more thoroughly he felt convinced, that to attempt to influence his son's resolution was only to entail a more fatal relapse, or a never-ending regret. He must decide for himself, to leave the decision without appeal.

And thus passed the long silent hours. His wife slept no more than himself. At daybreak, they heard their son getting up. Oh that they could read his heart at that moment! Their own almost seemed to stand still. They followed each movement with straining ear; they grasped each other's hands. Jacques was whistling softly, as his

habit was, when deep in thought: presently, he opened his door, went noiselessly down the stairs, and out into the street. Pierre Henri sprang to the window, drew aside the little curtain, and peeped out. A joy!—joy to his beating heart!—Jacques was in his common working-dress; his hod and trowel on his shoulder; his monotonous whistle changed into a lively tune; and his upright carriage and resolute step eloquent of the resolution he had taken, incontestably proving that his load was no longer a burden. Pierre Henri turned to his wife, hardly able to utter the words: 'He is safe—we are saved—our boy has comprehended it all!'

And from that hour all went right. Jacques laid his aspirations after literary fame on the shelf. Without renouncing his studies, he makes them his rest, not his business. Applying with all his energy to his trade, he has already become the best workman of the district: no one can estimate a job so accurately at a glance; the best accountant cannot make a quicker calculation. With all this, he is the joy of the house at home, as well as its reputation abroad. There is no livelier companion, no steadier friend; and having learned to guide himself, he has, in truth, become a guide to others.

# THE INFANT KING.

THE day had not yet dawned on the 7th October 1715 when a little boy of about five years of age, who occupied one of the most splendid apartments in the palace of Versailles, started from his sleep, and sitting up in bed, fixed his eyes eagerly on a man who was seated in a large arm-chair by his side. The light of a bronze lamp which hung suspended from the ceiling shewed him that his companion slept. He coughed two or three times, as if undecided whether or not to disturb his slumbers, but at length cried: 'Comtois—Comtois!'

'Sire?' replied Comtois, rousing himself hastily.

'Do pray look out, and tell me whether much snow has fallen in the night.'

Comtois approached the window, and lifting the curtain, quietly replied: 'Yes, sire, a great deal.' But the young king, who had followed with anxious eyes the movements of his valet, and had caught a glimpse through the window of the snow-covered landscape, exclaimed: 'How glad I am! Oh, take me up quick, Comtois! quick—quick: dress me—but *do* make haste, Comtois.'

'What can have put it into your majesty's head to

wish to get up so early this morning?' replied Comtois, seating himself quietly in his arm-chair.

'You do not know, perhaps, that I have a great battle to fight this morning, Comtois; and I would lay a wager that the enemy is already under arms. I would not for anything he should be in the field before me.'

'The enemy is asleep, sire; and if you take my advice, you will follow his example.'

'Sleep! the day of a battle? Who ever heard of such a thing? But take me up, Comtois, I say,' continued the child, tossing himself impatiently in the bed.

'Calm yourself, sire; you must be more reasonable. Madame de Ventadour has forbidden me to allow you to get up so early.'

'And I, Louis XV., king of France, I command you to take me up!'

'Your majesty must please to understand'——

'I do not understand anything; I *choose* to get up,' said Louis more eagerly. 'The little Duke de Chartres sent me a challenge yesterday: he is the head of one party, I of another. I am sure, Comtois, you would not wish your king to appear either lazy or cowardly in the eyes of his subjects?'

'You may be quite easy, sire, on that head—the kings of your race have never been either cowardly or indolent.'

'Take me up, then, if you please, before the sun rises.'

'What, sire! has the *sun* also sent you a challenge?'

'No, no, good Comtois; but it would melt my arms.'

'What arms have you then chosen, sire, which melt before the sun?'

'Excellent ones, Comtois, I can assure you—good balls of snow. You need not laugh, Comtois: a ball of snow well thrown, can give a famous blow, I can tell you.'

'I have not the slightest doubt of it, sire,' replied Comtois, still laughing.

'You shall be present at the battle, Comtois, and you shall see what a grand affair it will be. Just fancy—we shall form two camps: the Duke de Chartres will command one, and I the other. I shall have all the best under my orders—the Duke d'Harcourt, the Count de Clermont, the Marquis de Nesle. Oh, I have not been able to sleep all night thinking of it, and I have so longed to get up! Now, like a good Comtois, do make haste—the sun will melt all our weapons; and I am sure that those who are to fight under my banners are waiting for me already on the field of battle. Oh, how unhappy kings are, that they cannot get anybody to obey them!'

A slight tap at the bedroom door interrupted Louis in the midst of his speech; Comtois opened the door, and was not a little surprised on seeing the Duke de Villeroy, the governor of the young king, entering the chamber at this early hour.

'Is the king awake yet?' inquired the marshal.

'He has been wanting to get up for this hour past, monseigneur,' replied the valet de chambre.

The Marshal de Villeroy approached the bed. 'Sire,' said he, 'the Duke of Orleans is this day to be appointed to the regency; it is necessary that you should make a short speech on the occasion. Do me the honour of listening to me, I beg of you; for you must learn this speech by heart, so as to be able to repeat it before the whole court.'

'Yes, sire, I will,' replied Louis, who was in reality a timid boy, and who did not venture to shew his dissatisfaction at this delay.

'Listen to me attentively, then, sire; say after me: "*We declare*"'——

'Don't you think the sun, whenever it rises, will be sure to melt the snow?' interrupted Louis, whose attention was suddenly attracted by the glittering whiteness of the park, as its snowy vestment reflected the first beams of the rising sun. He had not heard a word of the commencement of his speech.

'Very possibly, sire,' replied Villeroy with an impatient gesture; 'but repeat after me now: "*We declare the Duke of Orleans.*"'

'*We declare the Duke of Orleans,*' said Louis; then, almost in the same breath he added: 'Comtois, just look whether the snow is still hard.'

'No matter whether it is or not, sire,' interrupted the marshal, who did not attempt to conceal his impatience at the inattention of his royal pupil. 'Now let us proceed then—"*regent of this kingdom.*"'

'I daresay that the Duke de Chartres has a pile of snowballs as high as this ready by this time.'

'If you do not pay more attention, sire,' said Marshal de Villeroy in a tone of severity, 'you will never learn your speech.'

'But I should much rather play in the park with the other children,' replied Louis petulantly.

'You shall go there, sire, after the ceremony.'

'But the snow will be melted, sir, by that time.'

'Well, sire, then it *must* be melted.'

'But then I shall not be able to make snowballs.'

'Well, then, you must do without them, sire.'

'And my battle, and my warriors, and all the other children who will be amusing themselves, while I am here shut up in my room!'

'Kings, sire, are not like other children; they cannot be allowed to be always running about and amusing themselves.'

'Then if so, it is not at all an amusing thing to be a king, Marshal de Villeroy.'

'I must really insist, sire, upon your learning this speech: you ought to have known it an hour ago.'

'Well, I *will* listen now,' said Louis.

The marshal, somewhat softened by this promise of docility on the part of his pupil, seated himself by the bedside, and repeated, word by word, a very short speech, which his pupil recited after him with great exactness. He then retired, feeling fully assured that the young Louis was well prepared to perform his part in the approaching ceremony.

Louis bounded with joy when he saw the door close upon his governor. 'Now then, for the park!' he exclaimed.

'Here is Madame de Ventadour, and your tutor Monsieur de Fleury,' said Comtois, as he ushered in these two new personages, followed by some domestics belonging to the palace, who carried a complete suit of clothes fitted for the royal child. When the divers articles which composed it were spread upon the table, the sight of so brilliant a costume helped to divert the mind of the young king for a moment from the fixed idea which had hitherto occupied his thoughts. But suddenly the idea seemed to strike him that this equipment was just the thing which would do to wear on the field of his intended battle.

'How beautiful it is—how very beautiful! Are you going to dress me in all these pretty things, dear mamma?' said he to his governess, of whom he was very fond, and whom he always called by the sweet name of mother.

'Certainly, my dear king,' she replied, as she began to perform his toilet. 'It is a pretty costume; is it not?'

'O how pleased my comrades will be to serve under my orders!' said Louis, as he examined separately each article.

'First, there was a little jacket with falling sleeves of violet-coloured cloth (*violet* being the colour appropriated to royal mourning, and the little Louis having only lately lost his grandfather, Louis XIV.); then there was placed upon his head a cap of violet *crêpe*, lined with cloth of gold; and finally a blue ribbon was passed around his neck, to which hung suspended the Cross of the Order of St Louis, and that of the Order of the Saint Esprit. Up to this point everything went on as smoothly as possible; the child, absorbed in the contemplation of this rich and brilliant costume, was beginning to forget his morning vexations: he longed to be dressed, in order that he might escape from the hands of his governess; and he was just on the point of asking Comtois to hand him his miniature weapons, in order to be ready for the battle, when, to his great surprise, Madame de Ventadour handed him a pair of splendid leading-strings in cloth of gold.

'What are these for, mamma?' said he.

'They are leading-strings, sire,' she replied.

'And what are you going to do with them?'

'To put them on you, sire.'

'On *me!* Leading-strings! You are joking, mamma?'

'They complete your costume, sire: they must be put on.'

'I cannot put them on, mamma: I really *will* not!'

'I am very sorry to be obliged to do anything which annoys you, my dear king; but it has been decided that in order to mark your age, leading-strings should form a part of your costume.'

'But I do not choose to have them on, dear mamma. I do not want them, and I will not put them on!'

'But they cannot be dispensed with, sire.'

'Not dispense with leading-strings! Indeed I can, dear mamma. What is the use of putting them on me? Do you ever see me tumble when I am walking? How long is it since I have given myself a bruise on my forehead? You do not put leading-strings on me to run all day in the woods, to go up and down stairs, to skip over the trenches, and now you want to put them on me when I am only going to ride in a carriage, and then to sit in an arm-chair. Indeed, mamma, you are not reasonable: leading-strings are only put on *little* children.'

'Every one knows, sire, that *you* are not a little child; certainly one is no longer a child at five years and a half; but still it cannot be helped—etiquette requires that on grand occasions you should wear leading-strings until your education is confided to the care of men.'

'Etiquette, custom! You say that every minute, dear mamma. The custom *ought* to be to put leading-strings on little children only who do not know how to walk. But if people are so anxious to use leading-strings, why not put them on all those old seigneurs we have here—on the Duke de Bourbon, who can hardly stand; or on the old Bishop de Troyes, who stumbles at every step: they, indeed, may be in want of them; but as for me, it is quite decided—I will not have them!'

'I entreat you, sire, to comply.'

'Do not talk to me any more about it, dear mamma. The sun is already risen; I have a battle to fight this morning, and my munition of war is not yet prepared; so pray do not keep me any longer.'

'Your leading-strings will not be the least in your way, sire. Pray put them on.'

'And how my companions would laugh at me, especially the Duke de Chartres!'

'They would not dare to do so, sire. Indeed it is not well done of you to require so much pressing about such a trifle. You ought to shew yourself a little more ready to obey one whom you honour with the title of mother.'

'If the other children had them too, mamma, then I should not mind; but look at the Duke de Nangis, the little Marquis de Nesle, &c.: did you ever see them in leading-strings?'

'But they are not kings, sire, as you are.'

'And I am sure, then, it is very tiresome to be a king. How I have been teased ever since I got up this morning on account of my kingdom! My battle has been delayed; I have had a long speech to learn by heart; and now you want to put on these ugly leading-strings. But it is of no use talking to me: I will not do it!'

'Monsieur de Fleury,' said Madame de Ventadour to the king's tutor, who stood in the window reading his breviary, 'will you have the kindness to come here and make the king listen to reason?'

'Monsieur de Fleury,' said the child, 'as you are at the window, will you be so good as to tell me whether the snow is beginning to melt?'

'Not yet, sire,' replied M. de Fleury, approaching the fire, in front of which stood Madame de Ventadour with the leading-strings in her hand, whilst the young king kept his hands clasped behind him, to prevent her from taking him by surprise, and slipping them on.

'Why are you so obstinate, sire? Give me your hand, and let me see you do cheerfully, and for the sake of pleasing Madame de Ventadour, that which, sooner or later, *must* be done.'

'But I want to go to the park,' said the little Louis with a swelling heart, and tears starting to his eyes: 'I have snowballs to make.'

'You have, in the first place, *duties* to perform, sire; and *you*, sire, more than all other children: for, as a king, you ought to set *them* the example. Begin to do so at once by yielding to the wishes of your governess: raise your arm, sire, if you please: well; now, the other. There, now, it is done, sire, and I thank you for your obedience.'

'If kings *are* happy, it is not while they are children at all events,' said Louis XV., as he looked with tearful eyes on the gold belt of his leading-strings.

'You are right, sire,' said M. de Fleury. 'It is later: it is when they have learned to make their people happy.'

'The king's carriage is at the door,' said a gentleman-in-waiting, opening the folding-doors of the king's apartment. Madame de Ventadour rose, took the king by the hand, and led him down the grand staircase to the carriage, whilst M. de Fleury and the royal pages followed. The day was bitterly cold; but the poor little king rejoiced in the freezing blast, for he thought it would keep the snow from melting, and he could yet have his battle on his way back. With this hope he cheerfully entered the carriage, and waited with patience for M. de Villeroy and the Duke du Maine, who had both the right of entering the royal carriage. They reached the step at the same moment; and the foot of the one having accidentally touched that of the other, each measured his opponent with a disdainful glance.

'I beg to observe to the Marshal de Villeroy,' said the Duke du Maine, 'that, in the quality of prince of the blood, I have a right to the seat of honour in his majesty's carriage.'

'And I,' replied the marshal, without yielding a step, 'beg to observe to the Duke du Maine, that, as governor to the king, I have a right to the seat of honour, and am only bound to yield it to a legitimate prince of the blood, and not to M. le Duc du Maine.'

'We shall see that,' replied the duke, stepping into the carriage. The marshal, with a fiery glance, laid his hand on the intruder's arm. During this discussion the carriage door was necessarily kept open, and the young king was freezing with the cold. At length he exclaimed impatiently: 'For goodness' sake, gentlemen, come in, and both of you take the place of honour: I should just as soon sit with my back to the horses.'

'That is out of the question, sire,' replied the marshal.

'Well, then,' replied the young king, shivering with the cold, 'draw lots to see who shall sit by my side, or else both take your seats with your backs to the horses.' This last advice of the young king was at length followed, and the eight horses started at full gallop.

The carriage was no sooner in motion than the Marshal de Villeroy, bending forwards towards the young king, asked him if he remembered his speech; but at that moment they were passing the park of Vincennes, and his heart was too full to answer. He heard the joyous cries of his young companions, who were fighting the battle of which he had dreamed all the preceding night; he saw the hard, glittering snow, which would have made such glorious bombs; and then, when he began to think that before he was free again all the fun would be over, the tears started to his eyes.

'What are you thinking of, sire?' inquired the marshal. Louis made no reply, but pointed to the battle-field, and his large black eyes looked so full of sorrow, that it touched the heart of the marshal.

'What can we do, sire?' he observed, as M. de Fleury had already done. 'The children of kings are not like other children: they have duties to fulfil; and as it is their business to set an example to their people, *no* duty must be left undone.'

By this time they had reached the Faubourg St Antoine, and the people, both in the windows and the streets, were assembled to look at their king. A thousand acclamations welcomed him on every side, but the poor little fellow was sad and pale—he still thought of his lost battle. They at length reached the palace of the Tuileries, and the young monarch was conducted to his throne in the Chamber of Peers by the Duke de Tresme, who filled the office of Lord High Chamberlain. Madame de Ventadour was already seated upon the steps of the throne, and the countenance of her little pupil brightened as he saw her. He exclaimed aloud with childish glee: 'Madame de Ventadour!' 'Hush!' said his governess kindly, whilst with an expressive glance she designated to him the imposing assembly by which they were surrounded. Louis XV. immediately resumed a little air of grave dignity which was natural to him, and began to look composedly around him on the striking spectacle which the court of France of that day offered when assembled in full costume. The young king himself, who formed the centre of attraction in this brilliant circle, was well formed to grace the high post he occupied. He stood erect upon his throne, and awaited with a dignified patience the commencement of the ceremony. It might almost have been imagined that he felt the importance of the functions he was called to fulfil.

Soon the mass of courtiers began to move around the throne, and one great functionary of state after another approached the little king, and addressed him in speeches

prepared for the occasion—all of which had one point in common, which was not a little distressing to their young auditor—namely, their interminable length. However, he bore the infliction with great apparent tranquillity, although it must be avowed that his glances were more frequently directed towards the window, where might be seen a tree bending beneath its sparkling, snowy burden, than towards the grave speakers of very grave and very heavy speeches. When the moment at length arrived for the young king to deliver *his* speech, the Marshal de Villeroy bent forward, and asked him in a whisper whether he remembered what he had taught him in the morning.

'Perfectly,' he replied.

'Now, then, is the time to say it aloud, sire,' said the marshal.

With perfect grace, and with a certain infantile timidity of manner, which added yet more to the charm of his appearance, Louis XV. repeated aloud, and with perfect correctness : 'We, king of France and of Navarre, declare the Duke of Orleans regent of this kingdom, to administer the affairs of state during our minority, conformably to the decree of parliament made on the 3d of September.'

The Duke of Orleans advanced to kiss the young sovereign's hand in token of gratitude, the Council of Regency was then named, and each member of it came forward in turn to perform the same act of homage. Then followed the administration of oaths, more speeches, and an endless routine of ceremonies, which became *wearisome* to all, but *insupportable* to the poor child. He at length ceased to listen, his eyes wandered towards the door, he stood up, sat down, yawned, played with the crosses which hung suspended from his blue ribbon, and then pettishly throwing them from him, began to yawn

anew. Suddenly his attention seemed arrested by some object in the far corner of the room; his eyes ceased to wander, and were filled with an expression of comic surprise. The marshal, who had been following with anxiety every movement of his pupil, looked in the direction to which the child's glance was directed, and soon discovered that the object of his attention was the old cardinal of Noailles, a prelate of pre-eminent ugliness, which was shewn off still more by his scarlet costume, and who was as yet unknown to the young prince, as he had only lately returned to the court, having been disgraced in the reign of Louis XIV.

The marshal, fearing doubtless that the old courtier might be displeased at this marked attention, whispered to his pupil a request not to look so steadfastly in that direction.

'But I choose to look that way,' replied the child.

'It is not polite,' replied his governor.

'So much the worse,' said the king.

'But it is very wrong of you, sire.'

'I am sorry for it; but it amuses me.'

'Listen to this gentleman who is making you a speech, instead of looking about you.'

'I am very tired of hearing him,' replied Louis.

'I beg of you, sire—sire—sire—pray attend to me.'

'Leave me alone,' said Louis impatiently, quite wearied out by the admonitions of his governor and the interminable speeches of his courtiers.

'But, sire, I cannot leave you alone,' replied the marshal: 'you are not here for the purpose of being amused.'

'Ah, my snow, my beautiful snow!' said the king, to whose mind the word *amusement* recalled with vividness his morning disappointment.

'You must not think about that now, sire, but attend to what is going on here.'

'Oh, *do* leave me alone!' said the king, bursting into tears.

'Sire, sire; pray hold up your head, and do not disgrace yourself in this way.'

The poor little king's tears were, however, unheeded; the wearisome ceremony lasted till the close of the day; and when poor Louis passed the park on his way back to Versailles, the finishing stroke was put to his sorrows, for —*the snow had melted!*

'Oh, my battle, my snowballs!' he exclaimed, weeping bitterly. To add to his mortification, as he mounted the stairs of his palace of Versailles, he met all his young playmates talking and laughing over the divers feats of prowess which had been performed during the day. They were all glowing with health and animation; and as the pale, wearied Louis passed the merry group, there was not one of them who envied his royal lot.

'Who gained the day?' inquired Louis mournfully.

'The Duke de Chartres,' was the reply; 'but the Marquis de Nesle fought very well too.'

'Come, then, at least, and tell me all about it,' said the little king.

'Sire,' interposed Madame de Ventadour, 'this is the hour for you to retire to rest.'

'Well, then, the hour must be put off,' said Louis pettishly.

'That, sire, is impossible; your gentlemen of the bedchamber are in waiting.'

'Oh how tiresome it is to be a king!' said Louis XV., his tears commencing to flow afresh as his governess led him to the bedchamber. 'I am always unfortunate: in the winter, I am not allowed to make snowballs; and in

the summer, when it is so fine, and everybody walks out, I am kept at home in the palace.'

'Oh, sire,' said his governess, as she began to undress him, 'are you not taken out whenever you please?'

'Am I indeed? And do you think I have forgotten the day of the fête of St Germains, when I was at the window, and saw such numbers of children passing by, and they all looked so happy? I asked you where they were going, and you told me, to the fair; and when I asked what this fair was, you told me it was a place where they amused themselves under the trees, and bought toys and sweetmeats; and that in the evening I should see all these children returning with their play-things and their cakes. Oh, how I did long to go! But you were sick, mamma, and so I was obliged to stay at home.'

'You shall go, sire, next year.'

'And in the winter,' resumed the king, 'it is so pleasant to run upon the snow, to make snowballs, to throw them at one's companions, and have them thrown at one's self in return; and now, to-day, they have made me miss the finest battle in the world! When will some snow fall again?'

'Come, sire, you must not think any more of that now, but try to go to sleep.'

'I can't go to sleep: I suppose I shall be told presently that this is the hour at which I *must* go to *sleep*, because I am a *king!*'

'Console yourself, sire,' replied his governess; 'when you are a man, you will be happier.' As Madame de Ventadour said this, she sighed, for she knew but too well that the *future* happiness of her little pupil was, if possible, even still more uncertain than the *present.*

# THE FOOL OF LABOUDIE.

SOME people are all hand and some all heart. The first do and the others feel. The one is always at work—labouring, creating, producing; the other spends his life in deploring the miseries of humanity, its sufferings, its wrongs—but there he stops. The same in private life: A man of hand supports his family, gives them good beef and mutton, dresses them well, and proves that he loves them by making them happy; the man of heart feels intensely if they are sick, has tears for the slightest ill that happens, deplores their want of luxuries and necessaries, sits by his chimney-corner and talks, but does nothing—proving, after all, that he loves but himself. He is the most amiable man in the world, a general favourite in society, an outwardly affectionate father and husband; but his children are half-starved, and his wife goes about in an old gown, which the man of hand's wife would give away to some beggar to whom it would be useful and welcome. Not that we object to heart; far from it. A man cannot have too much feeling if he allies with it the head to conceive and the hand to execute. A man wholly without heart is a monster; and the great defect of Napoleon's character

was, that with a mighty head and stupendous hand he had scarcely any heart. It is the union of hand and heart, with a head to guide both, which makes a man a useful member of society.

Ernest Delavigne was the only child of a widow. His father had been a superior farmer of considerable property, and had died leaving the land to his wife and son. But Ernest, though fond of the country, aspired to be something better than the peasantry around him. He lived in a part of France where ignorance prevailed over knowledge; where bad roads and impenetrable bogs retarded the progress of civilisation; and where the people were in that happy state of ignorance which prevailed over most parts of Europe some two hundred years ago: where agriculture caused twice the labour and gave half the returns which it afforded to the more enlightened; and where no one had ever yet attempted to penetrate the crust of barbarism which generally prevailed. Ernest had been educated at a town-school, and when a young man completed his education at a provincial college. Though acquiring all the general knowledge which was conveyed by the professors, he devoted himself particularly to chemistry as applied to agriculture, and to the formation of new agricultural implements. He returned home at twenty-one full of magnificent projects. He would effect a revolution in the land; he would open a course of lectures; he would teach them the advantages of all the new instruments of draining, of manuring; and, above all, he would effect a complete alteration in the dwellings—close, dirty, unwholesome, and comfortless now. Admirable and praiseworthy notion was that of Ernest Delavigne. We shall see how he carried it out.

Ernest had, as he thought, a very plain way before him. He set up as a lecturer, with the honest design of

instructing his less intelligent neighbours. Unfortunately, however, nobody went to his lectures; and all his solicitations met with a polite but peremptory rebuff. The people, in fact, liked their own way best, and would believe nothing to the contrary on mere hearsay. He was generally spoken of as a fool for his pretensions—the 'Fool of Laboudie.'

The manner in which Ernest was treated at length induced him to abandon all attempts at reformation, and he betook himself to Paris a somewhat wiser man. Experience had cooled his ardour for improving mankind. Arrived in Paris, he took up his lodging in the Quartier Latin, and went to see M. Benoit, a notary in high repute with the old aristocracy, who confided to him the management of their pecuniary affairs with a confidence and security which spoke volumes for his honesty and honourable character. He received M. Ernest kindly, listened to what he had to say patiently, and then gave him advice. He approved of his selecting medicine as a profession, and promised, if it pleased him, to introduce him into good society, that the intervals of time between his studies might be well spent. Ernest accepted gladly, and at once began the study of his new profession. It suited his character, his feeling for suffering humanity, to be the healer of the sick; and the prospect of associating as a student with the upper classes of society was pleasant and agreeable. He went to public lectures; he read hard; and in the evenings he visited one or two salons, which were freely opened to him on the recommendation of M. Benoit.

He found this way of passing his time vastly agreeable. He liked the conversation of ladies; for they, as he abstained from politics, sympathised with his views, approved of his humanitarian principles, and proved always an attentive audience. One evening he was

speaking of his old and favourite topic—the introduction of agricultural improvements into the country—when a young girl joined in the debate.

'Oh, monsieur,' she cried warmly, 'I am happy to meet with some one of my way of thinking. I lived in a country district which is very much behind the age, and having been some years in England, which enjoys such a vast superiority in this particular over any other part of the world, I am deeply anxious to see the example of our neighbours followed.'

Ernest was delighted, and after a few minutes he addressed his whole conversation to Mademoiselle Louise de Redonté. He found her to his astonishment learned in all farming details, though a year younger than himself; aware of more improvements in machinery than he had ever known of; and deeply conversant with all that was necessary to the comfort and well-being of both men and animals employed in agriculture. Before the end of the evening Ernest was in love. A French novelist would tell us that he had met his destiny. At all events, he considered himself fortunate to have fallen in with so charming a person, who joined to great beauty and accomplishment a taste for his favourite subjects of thought and talk.

Ernest and Louise met continually, and each day they renewed their intimacy. They talked together, they danced together, and before the end of three months the young man scarcely missed an evening at the house of Madame de Lastange, where she resided when in town. People at last began to insinuate to the old lady, that the friendship of the young people was rather warmer than should properly exist between a student in medicine and a rich heiress. A few days after this, Ernest missed Mademoiselle de Redonté from the evenings of Madame

de Lastange, who, without the least change in her manner towards him, informed him that she was gone to the country to her uncle, where indeed she spent the greater part of the year. She was a kind-hearted woman, and by this separation simply wished to spare both the pain which she thought must ensue if their affections became engaged. Ernest felt very dull: the charm of the soirees was gone. He did not cease to go, however, because it was probable that he might again see her there, but his visits became less frequent, and thus the season ended.

During the long summer months that ensued, Ernest continued the study of his profession. He wrote to his mother that he should not come that year to the country, because his disgust at his neighbours was so great he could not bear to meet with them. Besides, he wished to continue his studies, which would suffer by interruption. But he did not now devote himself to his books with half the same zest with which he had begun. His thoughts were far away in that country region, wherever it was, where Louise resided, and he thought the summer never would end. To distract his attention he varied his reading, added novels, poetry, and history to his scientific books; and thus with many a yawn, and many a longing, and many a weary hour, the time passed, and when the salon of Madame de Lastange again opened, Ernest presented himself the very first evening.

Louise de Redonté was there, more lovely than ever; and she welcomed the young man, as he eagerly advanced to greet her, with a smile which filled him with rapture. Madame de Lastange looked on in some alarm. Louise was in mourning: she had lost her uncle nearly six months, and she was rich in the extreme. She was surrounded at once by a perfect host of suitors, but she gave encouragement to none. Ernest still continued her

favourite companion, to the great annoyance of the mass of young men about town, who would have been delighted to have given her their name, and to have spent her hundred thousand francs of annual income. Still no one looked upon the intimacy of Louise and Ernest as anything likely to end seriously. The crowds of suitors who filled the salons of Madame de Lastange supposed that the young lady was a clever person, and shewed a preference for the conversation of the medical student—an individual she could not marry—simply that she might look round unobserved and unsuspected, and choose for herself.

'My dear Louise,' said her friend one day to her, 'how much longer do you mean to keep the men in suspense? There are more than a dozen dying for love'——

'Of my château and cash,' replied Louise laughing; 'but I am quite sure I shall see them all as rosy as ever next season.'

'Do you not, then, mean to select your future husband before you again bury yourself in your gloomy castle?' asked Madame de Lastange in an alarmed tone.

'My dear madame, I am rich, I am young, I have time and independence. I shall not choose a husband until I have found a lover whose affection is real, and whom I myself can like.'

Madame de Lastange mentioned several of her suitors with high praise, but Louise shook her head, and found fault with all.

'I have no patience with you,' cried the good lady. 'You encourage that young student so much, that you have no time to judge the merits of others. I have a great mind to close my door against him.'

'My dear De Lastange,' replied Louise gravely, 'if you cease to receive my *protégé*, you will make my evenings very dull. I shall run to the country a month sooner.'

Madame de Lastange sighed, and turned away, but she studiously avoided letting Ernest notice her annoyance; still, when the friends were together, she looked annoyed, and almost began to agree with those who supposed Louise to have some secret object in encouraging the medical student.

'Where do you intend settling on the completion of your studies?' said Louise one evening.

'In Paris, or some other large town,' replied Ernest.

'In town! I thought you preferred country life,' continued she, as if somewhat disappointed.

'I did once, but I have changed my mind. I originally intended devoting myself to agriculture; but now I have a profession, I prefer living in cities.'

'But why?'

'In the first place, to live in the country I should require a wife; but I despair of finding one suited to me,' replied Ernest unaffectedly.

'But what kind of wife would you like?' asked Louise, looking at him curiously.

'May I tell you?' said he timidly, looking up at her like a child looking at his mother when asking a favour. Of course he was allowed to speak his mind; and, need we add, there was in almost no time a thorough mutual understanding. Mademoiselle was a Frenchwoman, and, as such, was not burdened with diffidence.

Next evening it was generally known that Ernest Delavigne and Louise de Redonté were affianced, to the great consternation of all fortune-hunters, and the great joy of all those who sympathised with truthful feeling and sincere affection. But the salons of Madame de Lastange were no longer crowded: the host of interested suitors vanished.

'Do you know,' said Louise one evening as they were

talking of the future, 'that I mean to make a regular patriarch of you? I have determined to introduce among all my farmers and their neighbours the latest improvements, and to give them the benefit of all the agricultural discoveries of England and France.'

'It is useless making such attempts,' replied Ernest gravely; 'you will but lose your temper and your time.'

'Monsieur! Why you are as bad as the Fool of Laboudie.'

'Ha!' said Ernest, turning very pale.

'Why,' continued the merry girl, without noticing his uneasiness, 'you must know that my castle is close to Laboudie. My uncle was the Count de Plouvieres.'

'Oh!' replied Ernest.

'Well, there came from a neighbouring town, some two years back, a young man belonging to our place, who had studied agriculture, and who desired, it appears, to reform the neighbourhood. Instead of introducing the change himself, however, he tried to persuade others to do so; told the ignorant farmers of what they might do, but did not attempt to demonstrate his theories. People naturally enough laughed at his lectures—his disquisitions especially; as I am told he had land himself, and never thought of trying the sensible experiment of shewing his neighbours by practice the advantages he believed, but did not know to exist. Such well-meaning men are worse than useless: they stand more in the way of real progress than the most obstinate devotee of antiquity; they are mere sentimental, and not practical reformers. But why so gloomy, Ernest? Surely I have not offended you? I see you are a little unwell. Good-night. Go home to bed, and tell your old servant to make you some gruel. It will soon be my office to take care of monsieur when he thinks proper to be ill.'

Ernest took her proffered hand, shook it even more

neartily than usual, and went away. It was early. Just before midnight, and as the other guests were about to depart, the *bonne* of Madame de Lastange gave a letter to Louise, who alone, in a little boudoir where she had retired, since none but card-players remained, at once opened and read it.

'I write not in anger, but with deep sorrow. I love you too much to expose you to a life of misery. You have expressed too much contempt for persons of my character not to be very unhappy when you know me better. You will doubtless find, however, one worthy of you. I shall seek, after that severe but just lesson which I have now received, to win your esteem now that your love is impossible. Remember me kindly, if it be only because I have sufficient sense left to save you in time from everlasting unhappiness. This night, at eleven, I start for home.'

'What have I done?' cried Louise. 'Poor Ernest! how generous, how noble, how good! Poor fellow! how those thoughtless, bitter words must have gone to his heart. I must stop him. But no: he is gone. Well, I must wait until to-morrow. What a night he will pass travelling! How cruel he must think me!' And away she hurried to bed, as if by so doing the morrow would sooner come.

Meanwhile Ernest, whose mind had been enlarged and elevated by more extended studies, went away on his road home, subdued, dejected, and yet not wholly cast down. He saw distinctly the truth of all that Louise had said; he perceived where his own errors lay, and determined to profit by the lesson. He arrived at home after a long journey, calm, serious, and full of strong conviction of his own former pride, which made his present humility all the more pleasing. His mother was delighted

to see him ; and when he declared his intention of devoting himself in future to the farm, she was doubly pleased. He took up his former quarters, and then, after a day's rest, started for a long walk to recruit his body, somewhat enervated by study and town life. He followed the high-road which led to the Château de Plouvieres, along which were several small farms, and one or two very extensive ones. He walked along, his eyes fixed on the ground, in deep meditation, until he was suddenly aroused by a loud voice.

'Hollo there ! Monsieur Ernest, I want to speak with you,' said the very old farmer whom he had first made an attempt upon nearly two years before.

'What is it ?' replied young Delavigne, raising his head a little haughtily ; 'what can you have to say to the Fool of Laboudie ?'

'Sir !' cried the other, as they approached each other ; 'I beg your pardon. But do you not see we did not understand your fine talk, and we could not believe what we didn't see ? But then Mademoiselle Louise, our guardian angel, had just finished her model-farm, and there she had all the improvements of which you told us. Well, when we saw that really there were better ways than we knew of, you see we agreed to try, and I've bought a new plough—here it is—and it's a little out of order, and it's just to ask your advice about mending it that I called you.'

'With pleasure,' said Ernest, who had listened to the other's words with deep interest. 'Oh, it's nothing : a couple of nails and a screw are all that's wanted.'

Half an hour later the defect was remedied, and the two were at breakfast together. The old man said that if Ernest would now open his lectures they would be well attended of an evening ; and if confined to descriptions

referring to things the farmers began to understand, would continue so. The young man replied that he would make himself acquainted with what had been done, and would deliver his first lecture on the following Sunday—the only day when a rural population in France could be collected together for such a purpose. Next day Ernest visited the model-farm of the Château de Plouvieres. He found a considerable tract of land under cultivation. The head was an Englishman, who had resided some years in Normandy, and his assistants were French. He had, moreover, fourteen pupils, sons of neighbouring farmers. Mr Wilson informed Ernest that it was only the powerful influence of the Count de Plouvieres, and the affection of the people for Louise, his niece, which had enabled him to obtain their youth to bring up in improved notions. But now, he said, all went along easily. The farmers and their families felt and saw the great benefits which lay within their grasp, and, as their patrons gave them facilities for paying for all new implements by instalments, few refused to avail themselves of the opportunity. On fête-days and holidays the whole neighbourhood come to the model-farm, to amuse themselves by looking around; and a change, he said, was already perceptible. One house which had been burned down close by had been rebuilt upon new principles with regard to comfort and cleanliness, and all were anxious to follow the example.

Ernest was more than ever convinced of the wisdom of the practical course adopted by the Count de Plouvieres and Louise de Redonté. He saw clearly that if we would induce men to believe in our precepts, we must practise them ourselves; and that one example is worth a hundred expositions. He went away filled with admiration at the nobility of character, the sound sense and wisdom, of the

young reformer, and with his heart doubly imbued with love for the beautiful girl. He prepared his lecture in his mind during the whole three days which intervened, and when the hour came, entered the barn amid loud applause. The place was full. The whole neighbourhood, male and female, was there, with Mr Wilson, his assistants, and pupils. Everybody understood now that the object of Ernest Delavigne had been good; and all blamed themselves for not comprehending him, though in reality the fault was with him, who had not understood the right way to proceed.

He began. In eloquent words, with deep and strong feeling, he drew a picture of Laboudie before and after the return of Louise from England: he compared in a humorous way the different line pursued by the young lady and the Fool of Laboudie (*great laughter and applause*): he acknowledged her means to be greater, but also allowed that he might have made his own land the model-farm by industriously devoting himself to the very course of improvement which he recommended: he called down the blessings of Heaven on the lovely patroness of the locality, hardly able to restrain tears as he spoke, and then opened with his subject. He used simple and plain language: he spoke of things which all began to understand, and was listened to with deep interest and respectful attention. When he sat down the barn almost seemed about to fall, so violently did they shake it with their bravos and clapping of hands. But it was late, and most had a long way to go; so the assemblage dispersed, after receiving gratefully the promise of a continuation that day-week.

But one person lingered behind, and stood within the barn when all had left it save Ernest and his mother. They had reached the door before they made the discovery.

'Mademoiselle la Comtesse,' said Madame Delavigne respectfully.

'Ernest!' replied she, holding out her hand.

'Louise!' exclaimed he, for he saw in the smile which accompanied the offer of her hand that she was unchanged.

'And so monsieur runs away, and I must run after him!' said Louise, taking his arm. 'What think you, madame?' she continued: 'your son a month ago asked me to marry him; I consented, and a week ago he ran away, declaring he would not have me. Am I not very good to come and fetch him?'

'Louise! Louise!' replied Ernest passionately; 'I did not think you could marry the Fool of Laboudie.'

'My dear friend, my speech of the other evening only shews how wrong people are to judge from appearances. I had only heard a description of you under that name from an old servant, whose gossips I have been sufficiently punished for retailing.'

'But, my son,' cried the amazed mother, 'what is the meaning of all this?'

'My dear madame, that we are to be married, according to previous agreement, to-morrow three weeks,' said Louise, taking her hand; 'and that my husband is about to complete the work which I have so imperfectly begun.'

The whole affair was the most off-hand thing imaginable. The marriage of these two clever people—each clever in a particular way, the very difference of character being useful—created little surprise. Previous to the old revolution, M. de Lavigne—a name Ernest resumed, now he held a social position which ceased to make the aristocratic *de* assuming—had held nearly as high a position as the Count de Plouvieres. But he had not emigrated—preferring to fall into the position of a farmer to a wander-

ing exile in a foreign land. At the restoration his property, sold during two years he passed in prison as a *suspect*, remained in the hands of the ward purchaser. But he had still a respectable estate, if he farmed it himself, and he continued to do so ; and Monsieur Delavigne, despite its plebeian look, was quite as happy as he had been when M. de Lavigne. But his son, for the sake of his wife and her relatives, resumed the name of his right, to which he modestly avoided allusion until a few days before their marriage.

And now it was difficult to say which was the hand and which was the heart. Ernest had learned that mere personal sympathy with the ignorance or misery of our fellow-creatures is of little use, if we do not raise our hands and arms to do something ; and that the true friends of humanity are those who do their utmost to diffuse knowledge, to widen the circle of man's utility, and who by example and practice lead the march of civilisation. Every man may thus do his part in the great work of human progress. All that is wanted is the will to be useful. Ernest and Louise de Lavigne were a blessing to the whole country round. Smiling meadows, neat houses, productive fields, healthy peasantry, the absence of any glaring cases of poverty, considerable elevation of mind, above that which is the ordinary lot of the agricultural labourers, are the practical results of this happy disposition of mind, which makes the richest propriétaire of Laboudie consider all around him as his children, to whom he owes a fair share of his time and thoughts. They are intensely beloved, and there are many yet unborn who will live to bless the pleasing union in Ernest and Louise of the hand and the heart.

# THE BEAR-CHASE.

ONE evening, a short time after the battle of Fontenoy (1745), a group of the king's body-guard was congregated near the Latona basin at Versailles, listening to two of their number discussing a subject which at that period was rarely a matter of controversy in military circles.

'Refuse a duel after a public affront!' exclaimed the tallest of the speakers, whose bronzed features were rendered almost ferocious by a thick red moustache: 'it is a stain that all the waters of the deluge would not wash away.'

'I repeat, Monsieur de Malatour,' replied the other in a calm, polite tone, 'that there is more true courage in refusing than in accepting a duel. What is more common than to yield to passion, envy, or vengeance; and what more rare than to resist them? Therefore it is a virtue when exhibited at the price of public opinion; for what costs nothing, is esteemed as worth nothing.'

'A marvel! Monsieur d'Argentré, I would advise, if ever the king gives you the command of a company, to have engraven on the sabres of the soldiers the commandment—"*Thou shalt do no murder.*"'

'And wherefore not? His majesty would have better servants, and the country fewer plunderers, if we had in our regiments more soldiers and fewer bullies. Take, as an example, him with whom you seem so much incensed: has he not nobly avenged what you call an affront by taking, with his own hands, an enemy's colours, while your knaves most likely formed a prudent reserve behind the baggage?'

'Cowards themselves have their moments of courage.'

'And the brave also their moments of fear.'

'The expression is not that of a gentleman.'

'It is that of Monsieur de Turenne, whose family equalled either of ours, and who avowed that he was not exempt from such moments. Everybody has heard of his conduct to a braggadocio, who boasted in his presence that he had never known fear. He suddenly passed a lighted candle under the speaker's nose, who instantly drew back his head, to the great amusement of the by-standers, who laughed heartily at this singular mode of testing the other's assertion.'

'None but a marshal of France had dared to try such a pleasantry. To our subject, sir. I maintain that your friend is a coward, and you'——

'And I'—— repeated D'Argentré, his eyes flashing, and his lips firmly compressed.

'Hollo, gentlemen!' exclaimed a third party, who, owing to the warmth of the argument, had joined the group unperceived. 'This is my affair,' said he to Monsieur d'Argentré, holding his arm; then turning to his adversary, added: 'Monsieur de Malatour, I am at your orders.'

'In that case, after you, if necessary,' said D'Argentré, with his usual calmness.

'By my honour, you charm me, gentlemen! Let us go.'

'One moment,' replied the new-comer, who, young as he was, wore the cross of St Louis.

'No remarks. Gentlemen, hasten.'

'Too great haste in such cases evidences less a contempt for death than an anxiety to get rid of his phantom.'

'I listen, sir!'

'Monsieur d'Argentré just now stated that the bravest have their moments of fear. Without taking as serious his anecdote of Monsieur de Turenne, I shall add that, with the exception of the difference that exists between muscles and nerves, the courage of the duellist is more an affair of habit than of principle; for it is the natural state of man to love peace, if not for the sake of others, at least for himself. Do you wish me to prove it?'

'Enough, sir: we are not here to listen to a sermon.'

'Yet a moment. Here is my proposition: we are all assembled this evening previous to our leave of absence: I invite you, then, as also these gentlemen present, to a bear-hunt on my estate, or rather amongst the precipices of Clat, in the Eastern Pyrenees. You are very expert, Monsieur de Malatour—you can snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces, and you have no equal at the small-sword. Well, I shall place you before a bear, and if you succeed—I do not even say in lodging a ball in his head, but merely in firing upon him—I shall submit immediately after to meet you face to face with any weapons you choose to name, since it is only at that price I am to gain your good opinion.'

'Are you playing a comedy, sir?'

'Quite the contrary. And I even repeat that this extreme haste shews more the courage of the nerves, than of the true courage arising from principle.'

'What guarantee have I, should I accept your proposition, that you will not again endeavour to evade me?'

'My word, sir; which I take all my comrades to witness, and place under the safeguard of their honour.'

There ran through his auditory such a buzz of approbation, that De Malatour, though with a bad grace, was obliged to accede to the arrangement. It was then agreed that, on the 1st of September, all present should assemble at the Château du Clat.

Whilst the young lord of the manor is making the necessary preparations for their reception, we shall explain the accusation of which he was the object, yet which had not branded him with any mark of disgrace among a class of men so punctilious on the point of honour.

The young Baron de Villetreton, in entering amongst the gentlemen who formed the household guard of the king of France, carried with him principles which remained uncorrupted amidst all the frivolities of one of the most licentious courts in Europe. Such, however, is the charm of virtue, even in the midst of vice, that his exemplary conduct had not only gained him the esteem of his officers, and the friendship of his companions, but had attracted the attention of the king himself. One alone among his comrades, Monsieur de Malatour, took umbrage at this general favour, and, on the occasion of some trifling expression or gesture, publicly insulted him. Villetreton refused to challenge him, as being contrary to his principles, but determined that this seeming cowardice, in not fighting a well-known duellist, should be redeemed by some action of *éclat* during the campaign just commenced. That moment had arrived; and for his noble conduct in taking the English colours at the battle of Fontenoy, he received

the cross of St Louis from the king's own hand on the field, the eulogium of Marshal Saxe, and a redoubled enmity on the part of De Malatour.

The first care of the young baron on arriving at his estate was to call his major-domo, an old and faithful servant.

'I have business of thee, my master,' said he, cordially shaking him by the hand.

'Speak, monseigneur,' replied the old servant, who was deeply attached to his young lord: 'you know the old hunter is yours to his last drop of blood.'

'I never doubted it, my old friend. Did you receive my letter from Paris?'

'Yes, sir; and those gentlemen, your comrades, will have some work before them.'

'Are there bears already on the heights then?' asked Villetreton, extending his hands in the direction of one of the lofty peaks, whose summit, covered with snow, glittered in the morning sun.

'Five in all—a complete family—father, mother, and children; besides an old bachelor, whom the Spaniards have driven to this side.'

'In less than a week we shall go in pursuit of them. Do you know, friend, some of my comrades are rather rough sportsmen: there is one of them who is able to snuff a candle with a pistol at twenty paces.'

'Easier, perhaps, than to snuff a bear at four,' replied the old man laughing.

'That is what I said also. But as I should wish to judge for myself of his prowess, you must place us together at the same post—at the bridge of Maure, for instance.'

'Hum!' said the old servant, scratching his ear; 'it would better please me to have you elsewhere.'

'Why?'

'Because, to guard this post, a man ought to be in a state of grace, for he will be between two deaths—the bears and the precipice.'

'I know the one, and do not fear the other; thanks to your lessons.'

'I am sure of that. But with your leave, I should like to guard the bridge myself.'

'You are sure, then, that the bears will pass that way?'

'Sure—yes; but quite sure—no. Recollect that they are sullen and prudent beasts, which never confide their plan of route to any one.'

'It is agreed on. I shall guard the bridge with my comrade. Now, go and have the trackers ready.'

'Very well, very well,' murmured the old servant as he retired; 'I shall have my eye on him.'

Eight days afterwards, all those invited, not excepting Monsieur de Malatour—who, despite the delicate attentions of the host, preserved a cold reserve—were assembled at the château. The magnificent grandeur of the Pyrenees, their shining summits relieved against the blue sky of Spain, was an unlooked-for pleasure to the greater number of the guests, who for the most part belonged to the rich and fertile plains of the interior.

The morning following their arrival, a body of trackers and scouts, provided with all manner of discordant instruments—trumpets, saucepans, drums, &c.—were assembled under the walls of the château, with the old servant at their head; while by his side stood the mandrin, who proudly guarded a dozen large mastiffs, held in leash by his vigorous helpers. The young baron and his friends, armed with carabines and hunting-knives, had scarcely appeared, when, by a sign from the old servant,

the whole troop moved silently forward. The dogs themselves seemed to understand the importance of this movement; and nothing was heard but the confused tramp of feet, blending with the noise of the distant torrent, or, at intervals, the cry of some belated night-bird flying heavily homeward in the doubtful glimmer of the yet unopened day.

As the party reached the crest of the mountain which immediately overhung the château, the first rays of the sun breaking from the east glanced on the summit of the Pyrenees, and suddenly illuminating the landscape, discovered beneath them a deep valley, covered with majestic pine-trees, which murmured in the fresh breeze of the morning.

Opposite to them, the foaming waters of a cascade fell for some hundreds of feet through a cleft which divided the mountain from the summit to the base. By one of those caprices of nature which testify the primitive convulsions of our globe, the chasm was surmounted by a natural bridge—the piles of granite at each side being joined by one immense flat rock, almost seeming to verify the fable of the Titans; for it appeared impossible that these enormous blocks of stone could ever have been raised to such an elevation by human agency. Sinister legends were attached to the place; and the mountaineers recounted with terror that no hunter, with the exception of the old servant, had ever been posted at the bridge of Maure without becoming the prey of the bears or the precipice. But the old servant was too good a Christian to partake of this ridiculous prejudice: he attributed the fatality to its real cause—the dizziness arising from the sight of the bears and the precipice combined, by destroying the hunter's presence of mind, made his aim unsteady, and his death the inevitable consequence. He

could not, however, altogether divest himself of fears for his young master, who obstinately persevered in his intention of occupying the bridge with his antagonist.

After placing the baron's companions at posts which he considered the most advantageous, the old servant rejoined his men, and disposing them so as to encompass the valley facing the cascade, commanded the utmost silence to be preserved until they should hear the first bark of his dog. At that signal the mastiffs were to be unleashed, the instruments sounded, and all to move slowly forward, contracting the circle as they approached the cascade. These arrangements being made, the old servant and his dog, followed by the mandrin alone, disappeared in the depths of the wood.

For some minutes the silence had remained unbroken, when suddenly a furious barking commenced, accompanied by low growling. Each prepared his arms; the instruments sounded; and the mastiffs being let loose, precipitated themselves pell-mell in the direction of the struggle. Their furious barking was soon confounded with the cries of the hunters and the din of the instruments, mingled with the formidable growling of the bears, making altogether a hideous concert, which, rolling along the sides of the valley, was repeated by the distant echoes. At this moment the young baron regarded his companion, whose countenance, though pale, remained calm and scornful.

'Attention, sir,' said he in a low voice. 'The bears are not far from us: let your aim be true, or else '——

'Keep your counsels for yourself, sir!'

'Attention!' repeated Villetreton, without seeming to notice the surly response—'he approaches!'

Those who were placed in front of the cascade, seeing the animals directing their course to the bridge, cried

from all parts: 'Look out, look out, Villetreton!' But the breaking of branches, followed by the rolling of loosened stones down the precipice, had already given warning of the animal's near approach. Malatour became deadly pale; he, however, held his carabine firmly, in the attitude of a resolute hunter.

A bear at length appeared, with foaming mouth and glaring eyes, at times turning as if he would fain struggle with his pursuers; but when he saw the bridge, his only way of escape, occupied, he uttered a fearful growl, and raising himself on his hind-legs, was rushing on our two hunters, when a ball struck him in the forehead, and he fell dead at their feet.

Malatour convulsively grasped his gun—he had become completely powerless. Suddenly new cries, louder and more pressing, were heard.

'Fire! fire! he is on you!' cried the old servant, who appeared unexpectedly, pale and agitated, his gun to his shoulder, but afraid to fire, lest he should hit his master.

The latter, perceiving his agitation, turned round: it was indeed time. On the other side of the bridge, a bear, much larger than the first, was in the act of making the final rush. Springing backward, he seized the carabine of his petrified companion, and lodged its contents in the animal's breast ere he could reach them. He rolled, in the death-struggle, to where they stood. All this was the work of an instant. The knees of the hardy old hunter shook with emotion at the escape of his young master; as for Malatour, his livid paleness, and the convulsive shuddering of his limbs, testified the state of his mind.

'Take your arms,' said the young baron, quickly replacing in his hands the carabine; 'here are our

comrades—they must not see you unarmed; and,' turning to the servant, 'not a word of all this.'

'Look!' said he to his companions as they gathered around, pointing to the monstrous beasts—'one to each. —Now, Monsieur de Malatour, I wait your orders, and am ready to give the satisfaction you require.'

The latter made no reply, but reached out his hand, which Villetreton cordially shook.

That evening a banquet was given to celebrate the double victory. Towards the end of the repast a toast to 'the vanquishers' was proposed, and immediately accepted. Monsieur d'Argentré, glass in hand, rose to pledge it, when Malatour, also rising, held his arm, exclaiming: 'To the sole vanquisher of the day!—to our noble host! It was he alone who killed the two bears; and if, through his generosity, I have allowed the illusion to last so long, it was simply for this reason: the affront which I gave him was a public one—the reparation ought to be public likewise. I now declare, that Monsieur de Villetreton is the bravest of the brave, and that I shall maintain it towards all and against all.'

'This time, at least, I shall not take up your gauntlet,' said Monsieur d'Argentré.

'There's a brave young man!' cried the old servant, whom his master had admitted to his table, and who endeavoured to conceal a furtive tear. 'Nothing could better prove to me, sir, that, with a little experience, you will be as calm in the presence of bears, as you are, I am sure, in the face of an enemy.'

# LUCKY JACK.

JACK had served his master seven years; then he said to him: 'Master, my time is out. Now I should like to go home to my mother. Give me my wages.'

The master answered: 'You have served me truly and well: as the service, so shall the reward be.'

With these words he gave him a bag of heavy silver money that was as big as Jack's head. Jack took out his pocket-handkerchief, wrapped the bag up in it, put it upon his shoulder, and set out on the road home. As he went along thus, always putting one leg before the other, a man came in sight, who trotted by brisk and fresh upon a spirited horse.

'Ah!' said Jack aloud, 'what a beautiful thing riding is! There he sits, as if he were in a chair; stumbles over no stone, saves his shoes, and gets to the end of his journey he doesn't know how!'

The rider, who had heard him, called out: 'Well, Jack, why then do you trudge afoot?'

'Ah! because I must carry home this bag. It is real silver; but I can't hold my head up for it, and it galls me on the shoulder.'

'I tell you what,' said the rider, stopping; 'we will exchange. I give you my horse, and you give me your bag.'

'With all my heart!' said Jack; 'but I warn you it will be a deal of trouble to you.'

The rider jumped off, took the bag, and helped Jack to mount. Then he put the reins into his hand, and said: 'Now, when you want to go very fast, you must cluck with your tongue, and call out "Hupp, hupp!"'

Jack was in a state of great joy as he sat on the horse, and rode along so bold and free. After a little while he thought he would go faster, and he began to cluck with his tongue, and to call out 'Hupp, hupp!' The horse upon this started suddenly off at a brisk trot, and before Jack was aware of it, he was thrown off, and lying in a ditch which separated the fields from the high-road. The horse would have run away had not a countryman stopped it, who came along the road driving a cow before him. Jack scrambled up, and stood on his legs. But he was vexed, and said to the countryman: 'Riding is but a sorry joke, especially if you get hold of such a jade as this, that kicks and throws you off, so that you well-nigh break your neck. I will never get on its back again. That's the best of your cow: you can walk along behind her at your ease; and besides that, you have milk, and butter, and cheese every day for certain. What would I give if I had a cow!'

'Well,' said the peasant, 'as it would be a great favour to you, I'll give you the cow for the horse.'

Jack agreed to it with a thousand thanks; and the countryman threw himself on the horse, and rode hastily away.

Jack drove his cow peacefully before him, and congratulated himself on his lucky bargain. He said to

himself: 'Now, if I have only a bit of bread—and certainly I shall never be in want of that—I can, as often as ever I please, have butter and cheese to eat with it; if I am thirsty, I milk my cow and drink milk: heart! what more do you want?' When he came to an inn he stopped, and with great joy ate clean up all the bread he had for dinner and supper, and called for a glass of beer, which he paid for with his last few farthings. Then he continued his journey, driving his cow towards the village where his mother lived. But as the mid-day drew on the heat became more oppressive, and Jack found himself on a heath which would last him for an hour's walk. He got so hot that his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth for thirst. 'The thing is easily to be remedied,' thought Jack; 'now, I will milk my cow, and refresh myself with the drink.' He fastened her to a dead tree, and tried to milk her, but notwithstanding all his trouble not a single drop would come. As he set about it very awkwardly, the impatient animal at last gave him such a kick on the head with one of her hind-legs that he fell back on the ground, and for some time did not know at all where he was. Fortunately, just then a butcher came along who had a young pig lying in his wheelbarrow.

'Hollo! what's the matter here?' said he, helping poor Jack to rise. Jack told him all that had happened. The butcher handed him his flask and said: 'There, take a drop and cheer up. You will never get any milk from the cow: it is an old beast, at the best only fit for the plough or the slaughter-house.'

'Alas, alas!' said Jack, stroking the hair down over his head, 'who would have thought it? It is certainly a good thing when one can kill a beast for the use of the family: what meat it gives! But I don't care much for cow's flesh; it isn't juicy enough for me. Ah, if one

could have a young pig! that has a different flavour, and over and above there 's sausages!'

'Hark ye, Jack!' said the butcher; 'for your sake I 'll let you have the pig for the cow.'

'God reward you for your friendship!' said Jack, and he handed the cow over to him. The young pig was untied from the barrow, and the cord with which it was bound given into his hand.

Jack went on his way, and thought how everything happened according to his wishes; and how, if any misfortune occurred, some good thing immediately made amends for it. As he was dwelling upon these thoughts, a young fellow came up to him, carrying a beautiful white goose under his arm. They said good-day to one another, and Jack began to talk about his good-luck, and how he had always made such an advantageous exchange. His companion said he was taking his goose to a christening feast. 'Just lift her up by the wings,' continued he, 'and see how heavy she is. She has been crammed for eight weeks, and he who eats her must wipe the fat from both sides of his mouth!'

'Yes,' said Jack, holding her up in one hand, 'she weighs her weight; but my pig is not so bad.'

In the meantime the man looked about him suspiciously, and shook his head. 'I tell you what,' he began, 'it is not all quite right with that pig. In the village through which I have passed, a pig belonging to the mayor has just been stolen. I fear—I fear you have it there by the rope. It would be a bad day's work if you were found with it; at the least you would be locked up in the black hole.'

Poor Jack was terrified. 'Ah,' said he, 'help me out of this scrape! you know the parts here better than I do: take my pig there, and leave me your goose!'

'It's a great risk for me,' answered the man; 'but I will not be the cause of your getting into misfortune.'

So he took the rope in his hand, and drove the pig along a by-way; while our good Jack, released from his anxiety, went on towards home with the goose under his arm. 'If I consider rightly,' said he to himself, 'I have still the best of the bargain: first the good roast; then the quantity of fat that will drip from it; and finally, the beautiful white feathers, which I will have my pillow stuffed with, upon which I shall sleep without rocking. What a pleasure there will be for my mother!'

As he was passing through the last village, there stood a scissor-grinder with his barrow, singing to his burring work. Jack stood still and watched him, and at last went up to him and said: 'I suppose you get on very well, as you are so jolly at your grinding?'

'Yes,' answered the grinder, 'my handicraft is founded on a mine of gold. Your true grinder is a man who, as often as he puts his hand in his pocket, finds money in it. But where did you buy that fine goose?'

'I didn't buy it; I changed it for my pig.'

'And the pig?'

'I got that for my cow.'

'And the cow?'

'I got that in exchange for my horse.'

'And the horse?'

'I gave a bag of silver money as big as my head for that.'

'And the bag of silver money?'

'Oh, that was my wages for seven years' service.'

'You always knew how to help yourself,' said the grinder. 'But if you could now so manage as to hear money jingling in your pocket whenever you moved, you would have made your fortune.'

'How is that to be done?' said Jack.

'You must be a grinder, like me: for that you want nothing but a whetstone—everything else comes of itself. There, I have one; it is a little damaged, but you shall give me in return for it nothing except your goose. What do you say to that?'

'How can you ask me?' said Jack. 'I shall surely be one of the happiest men on earth. If I have money as often as I put my hand in my pocket, what need I care for?' With which he held out the goose to him.

'Now,' said the grinder, lifting up a heavy common stone from the field which lay near him—'there, you have a proper stone to begin with, which will bear a good blow: you can hammer your old nails straight upon it. Take it, and be careful of it!'

Jack put the stone on his shoulder, and went on with a cheerful heart. His eyes glistened with joy, and he said to himself: 'All my wishes are fulfilled, just as if I were a Sunday-child.' * But now, as he had been upon his legs since break of day, he began to feel tired; he was also worried by hunger, for he had eaten up all his provisions at one meal, in joy at the cow he had purchased. At last he could only get on with great difficulty, and was obliged to rest every moment. The stone pressed heavily on him, and he could not help thinking what a good thing it would be if just now he were not obliged to carry it. Like a snail, he came crawling into a field to rest and refresh himself with a drink of fresh water; and that he might not injure the stone while he was sitting down, he laid it carefully beside him on the edge of the well. Then he turned round to draw some water; but, as he turned, he pushed accidentally against

* It is a popular belief in Germany that persons born on a Sunday succeed in all they undertake; also, that they are able to see ghosts.

the stone, and it plunged into the well. When Jack with his own eyes had seen it sink to the bottom, he sprang up in joy—then knelt down and thanked God, with tears in his eyes, that he had shewn him this mercy also, and had delivered him from the stone so easily, which was the only thing wanting to his happiness. 'There is no man under the sun so happy as I am!' cried he; and so with a light heart, and free from all burden, he now bounded on till he was at home with his mother.*

* This piece is somewhat altered from the German of Grimm.

# THE BOG-OAK SHAMROCKS.

CHARLES and Ellen Murphy were the children of a small farmer in the west of Ireland. Their father and mother died of fever within a few days of each other, when the boy was fourteen, and his sister twelve years old. Their only near relative was a cousin, who lived in a neighbouring village, and who, on the Murphys' death, came over to arrange their affairs. He found that when the stock, crops, and furniture were sold, and the rent and other debts paid, five pounds and a tolerable supply of clothes were all that remained for the orphans. Tom Handley was a good-natured man, but his own circumstances were far from flourishing, and he had a wife and family to maintain. He therefore felt rather embarrassed as to what could be done with his young cousins; and calling Charles to him on the morning that the farm was surrendered he said: 'Well, Charley, boy, what do you think would be best for you and Nelly to do?'

The boy sighed deeply. 'I don't know, Tom,' he said: 'I'd like to work, and try to support her if I knew how —if you'd put me in the way of doing it.'

'Tis little you'd earn for a good while yet, I'm thinking,' replied Tom. 'You're a slight young fellow, not over strong; and I believe you were brought up more to the book-learning than to anything else.'

'Yes; my poor father was giving me a good education, thinking I'd be fit for a clerk in a counting-house, in case the bad times would oblige him to give up farming; or "at anyrate," he would say, "learning is no burden to any one." But now that's all over, and I know I have nothing to look to but my own work to support myself and Nelly.'

'Well,' said Tom, after a pause, 'you and your little sister can come home with me. I know *herself* (his wife) will be willing to give ye both the run of the house. I'll put your five pounds into the savings-bank, and we'll find you something to do in the fields, and Ellen might make herself useful minding the young infant.

Charles thanked his cousin; and then with hearts full of grief for the kind parents they had lost, he and his sister accompanied Tom Handley to his home, about six miles distant.

It was a long, low, thatched cabin, with a potato-field at the back, a cabbage-garden at one side, a pig-sty at the other, and in front the filthy, green, stagnant pool which impedes the entrance to many an Irish tenement. In it and about it were disporting themselves a motley crew of quadrupeds and bipeds; the former consisting of pigs and dogs, the latter including ducks, geese, and children. At the door stood Mrs Handley, holding a wooden *piggin* filled with bruised potatoes and bran, and busily engaged in feeding a goodly company of cocks, hens, and chickens. Her eldest son, a fine, rosy, dirty boy of eight, stood armed with a furze fagot, lustily repelling the unlawful incursions of the before-named

denizens of the pool, who, with the exception of the children, seemed to think that their favoured rivals of the roost were getting far more than their share of the good things of this life; and that it was really worth risking something for a portion in the mess of hot potatoes delicately mingled with bran.

'Here we are, Kitty,' said Tom, 'come home to you, thank goodness, safe and sound! I hope the praties are nearly boiled, for I'm sure Nelly and Charley must be starving hungry.'

'They 'll be ready in less than no time, Tom; and I have a fine bowl of butter-milk and a fresh egg for you into the bargain.—You 're welcome, children,' she continued, 'kindly welcome; only I wish I had a better place for you.' And wiping her hands on her checked apron, she gave them both a hearty salutation, and led them into the cabin. Although their home had been humble, and their clothing coarse, Charles and Ellen had always been accustomed to strict cleanliness in both; they therefore felt shocked at the first view of their future dwelling. The mud floor was damp, dirty, and worn into ruts; the wooden furniture, although sufficiently abundant and substantial, looked as if it were rarely scoured; and whenever the half-door happened to be left open, the living creatures before enumerated were sure to rush in, bearing with them no small portion of the lacustrine deposits at the door. Charles perceived the painful expression on his sister's face, and drawing her hand within his, he whispered: 'We ought to be thankful to be here, Nelly, and not in the workhouse.'

After supper, they were taken into a very small room, a sort of den partitioned off the kitchen, containing two good soft-looking beds. In one of these Ellen was to sleep with two of her little cousins—the other was

occupied by Mr and Mrs Handley and their youngest child. An old stuff curtain was drawn between the two bedsteads—a piece of delicate refinement very uncommon in an Irish cabin. For Charles and the eldest boy a straw-bed was made in a *settle* in the kitchen. Despite the novelty of their situation, both brother and sister slept soundly, and awoke next morning with hearts, though sad, yet grateful to God for giving them even *this* shelter.

After breakfast, Tom Handley said : 'Now, Charley, come out to the field, and drive the cows into the lower inch. You can stop there and watch them ; and mind, don't let them get into the meadow.'

'Here, Ellen,' said Mrs Handley, 'take this child from me, and good-luck to you : he won't let me do a ha'porth but dandling him all day : 'twill be a fine thing for me if you can mind him.'

Both brother and sister expressed their readiness to do whatever they could to assist their cousins, for they had been well instructed, and knew that they ought not to eat the bread of idleness. Yet they could not help feeling their situation irksome, for beside the physical discomforts of their abode, Ellen was kept all day in close attendance on a cross child, which was also so fat and heavy, that the slender growing girl became bowed beneath its weight. Charles, too, was shut out from that mental cultivation of which he had begun to taste the sweets, with the painful consciousness, that the few pence he earned by herding cows for a neighbouring farmer were quite insufficient to pay for his own and Ellen's support. After some time, the Handleys, always poor, became exceedingly distressed. A violent distemper broke out among cattle, and carried off their only cow. No more milk for the children—no firkin of butter towards paying the rent. Then the season was

wet, and the potatoes partly failed; and to crown all, poor Tom himself was seized with fever, and lay for many days between life and death.

One morning, when he was beginning to recover, his wife called Charles, and giving him her solitary Sunday gown, a much prized garment of blue and yellow chintz, said: 'Here, Charles, carry this to T——; take it to the pawnbroker's, and borrow as much on it as he'll give you, and then buy two ounces of tea and a quarter of sugar for poor Tom, and a stone of meal for ourselves.'

'No, ma'am, begging your pardon, I won't do that; but do you think you could get me the savings-bank book that Tom has?'

'What for, child?—that's an empty book. Sure we had no money in the bank this many a day.'

'O ma'am, I mean *my* book: there's five pounds in it, and I'll draw it out for you to-day.'

'No, boy, no,' said Kitty, applying the corner of her apron to her eyes; 'I wouldn't rob the orphans that way: what luck could I expect for my own if I did? Keep your little penny: I am as much obliged to you as if I took it.'

'Ma'am,' said Charles earnestly, 'if you please you *must* take it. Aren't you and poor Tom like parents to Nelly and me?—don't you share every bit and sup with us, though you want it so badly yourselves?—how, then, could I have the heart to see you and the children want while I have it?'

'Well, Charley, you're a good boy, and I will take it from you as a loan. Please God, when *himself* is well, we'll soon be able to put it back; and indeed I think he'd a'most murder me for touching it at all.'

The book was produced, Charles took it to the town, drew out his money, and having purchased some neces-

saries for the family, returned cheerfully home. He gave the money to Mrs Handley; but she, although a kind-hearted, honest creature, was, truth to tell, a bad manager, so that the sum did not last as long as it should have done. One day, when Handley was just able to go out, his eldest little girl, a fine intelligent child of seven years old, her father's special favourite, fell off a wall over which she was climbing, and injured her knee severely. The hurt was at first neglected, and then carelessly looked at by an ignorant village apothecary, who pronounced that it required nothing but rest; and the consequence was, that the joint stiffened, and the poor child seemed condemned to a lifelong lameness. Misfortunes, it is said, seldom come alone. At this last stroke, Tom Handley, as he said, 'fairly lost all heart.' He surrendered his little farm, removed into a small cabin, and engaged as day-labourer with a neighbouring farmer. Workmen at this time were very plenty, and money very scarce, so that the united earnings of Tom and Charles scarcely sufficed in Irish phrase, 'to keep soul and body together.'

The children and Ellen grew pale and thin, and poor Mrs Handley almost heart-broken. 'Ah, Nelly,' she would say, as she gave her the youngest child to hold, 'the darling isn't heavy *now* to carry: God help my little Tommy, he's wasting away like a snow-drift on the hill. May our heavenly Father look down on us all!'

From long confinement, poor little Mary became very fretful; and as Ellen was completely occupied in minding the youngest child, which was cutting its teeth, and Mrs Handley had, as she often declared, 'fifty things to do at once,' there was seldom any one at leisure to attend to her. But when Charles came in after his day's work, her pale face used to brighten, for the boy took

pleasure in amusing his little sick cousin, and had many playful devices for that purpose. Tom Handley used to sigh when he saw his poor child unable to eat the coarse porridge, which, in very scanty measure, was all he could procure for his family; and once Charles heard him murmur: 'Ah, then, dear, if I could get you the white bread, and the new milk, and the drop of broth, you'd soon be well, and strong, and jumping on my lap as you used long ago!'

One day, as Charles was driving the cows through a turf bog, he saw a fine solid piece of the black oak which in Ireland abounds beneath the peat-moss, and is used by the peasantry for firewood. He carelessly picked it up, thinking it would serve to make the fire blaze that evening; and afterwards, when he sat down beside a rock, watching his charge, he took out an old penknife, and began idly to chip the edges of the wood. Suddenly he remembered a toy which he had seen and greatly admired years before: it was a cup and ball: and it occurred to him that if he could carve one ever so rudely, it would afford great amusement to little Mary. He accordingly commenced; and although the wood was hard, the knife blunt, and his hand unpractised, yet he had made some progress before evening. After supper, he sat next Mary, and while telling her some little long-remembered tale, he continued carving and rubbing his slip of bog-oak. In two days the cup and spike were finished; then came the ball, and this, without a lathe, was no easy matter to accomplish. However, perseverance is a wonderful thing: with it a new world was discovered; without it the most trifling enterprise will rarely succeed. So Charles worked hard at his ball, and after many failures, made one so round and smooth, that his delighted little cousin, after some practice, seldom failed

to catch it on the cup, and even now and then, with the utmost triumph, displayed it sticking on the spike.

It happened about this time that the farmer whose cows Charles herded had occasion for a messenger to the county town, to bring home some groceries which could not be procured in the village. He told Charles he would send him, and giving him sixpence to procure his breakfast in the town, desired him to start before dawn, as he would have a distance of fourteen miles to walk, but could return with his purchases in a neighbour's cart.

In due time Charles reached the town, executed his commissions, and saw them safely stowed away under the care of the man with whom he was to return, before he thought of refreshing himself. He then took out his silver sixpence, saying to himself as he looked at it, 'I can't go home without eating something: I'll get a penny bun, and half a pint of milk; then I'll have fourpence-halfpenny left. Ellen wants a thimble: I saw her poor finger quite red and sore from trying to work without one—that will cost another penny. I'll take a nice white twopenny loaf to little Mary, and the three-halfpence over I'll put by towards mending Ellen's shoes.'

The boy had finished his scanty breakfast, and was thinking that but for the dear ones at home he would very much like to buy another piece of bread, when his foot struck against something that arrested his attention. The street was very muddy, and when he stooped, he saw a small paper parcel almost covered by the gutter. He picked it up, opened it, and found wrapped up in three papers an old battered-looking gold coin. He turned it round, and on examining the envelope in which it was folded, perceived written on it the name of Mr Martin, a jeweller in the town.

To his shop Charles hastened, anxious to restore the coin; for the idea of retaining it never once occurred to his honest mind. When he entered, he found Mr Martin engaged in conversation with a lady, who held some dark ornaments in her hand; so, drawing back, he waited until the jeweller should be disengaged.

'Can you tell me,' said the lady, 'where I could get some shamrocks carved to match these?' And she shewed a bracelet very tastefully formed of shamrocks carved in black oak, and fastened on an elastic string.

'I really do not know, madam,' replied Mr Martin. 'I have sometimes seen ornaments similar to these made by amateurs; but I am not aware that any regular workman could be found to do it.'

The young lady looked disappointed.

'This bracelet,' she said, 'was made for me by my brother, who is now in India; and for his sake I prize it most highly. By accident, two of the shamrocks were broken yesterday, and I am most anxious to have them replaced. I would gladly pay highly for having it done.'

With heightened colour and sparkling eyes Charles stepped forward. 'If you please, ma'am'—he began, and then hesitated.

'Well, my boy,' said the lady kindly, 'what do you wish to say?'

'I think, ma'am, I could carve shamrocks. I have a nice piece of bog-oak at home, and I'd be proud to try and do my best.'

'Did you ever learn to carve oak?'

'No, ma'am: I only tried by myself to make a cup and ball to please our little Mary.'

'Is it to sell anything you are waiting here?'

'No, ma'am,' replied Charles; and handing the gold coin to the jeweller, he continued, 'I wanted, sir, to ask

you if you know who owns this, as your name is on the paper. I found it just now in the street.'

Mr Martin examined the coin, and exclaimed: 'Miss Elwyn, this is the very antique piece I sold your uncle yesterday! Did he lose it?'

'Ah, yes. I heard him say last night that he missed a curious coin he had just purchased, and feared he must have dropped it.'

'My honest little fellow,' said the jeweller to Charles, 'I am sure Mr Elwyn will be much obliged to you, and will give you some reward for your trouble.'

'I have had no trouble, sir,' said Charles a little proudly; 'and I don't want to be rewarded for doing what is only right.'

'But,' said the soft voice of Miss Elwyn, 'I want to know more about the oak-carving. I daresay Mr Martin will let me sit in his parlour while you tell me all about yourself and "little Mary."'

The lady's gentle manner and sweet countenance soon won the confidence of Charles; and he gave her an artless account of his history, ending by saying: 'I think carving wood would soon come easy to me, only my knife is so very blunt. Will you please, ma'am, to let me look at the shamrocks you shewed Mr Martin?'

He examined them minutely, and then looked up with a beaming smile: 'I think ma'am, I 'm *sure* I could carve leaves like these, if I had the pattern for a few days.'

'Then,' said Miss Elwyn, 'you shall take the bracelet home with you: I know you are an honest boy, whom I may trust.—Mr Martin,' she continued, 'will you shew me some of the best and strongest penknives you have got, and allow this boy to select one?'

'Oh, thank you, ma'am—thank you!' said Charles. 'I will take great care of the knife and the bracelet, and

bring them both back to you as soon as I have the shamrocks finished.'

'The knife I mean to make you a present of: but on what day do you think you can meet me here with the bracelet?'

Charles considered, saying half to himself in an undertone: 'To-morrow there will be the master's horse to take to the forge, and the home-fields to be ploughed the rest of the week; and then after that the turf to be drawn—altogether, I won't have much time, I'm afraid. This day-fortnight, ma'am,' he continued aloud, 'please God, I'll try to be here, and bring you the best shamrocks I can make. I know you won't be angry if they're not nice enough, because, indeed, I'll do my very best.'

Miss Elwyn and Mr Martin were both amused at the boy's earnest, artless manner, and bade him a friendly good-bye.

Charles kept his promise, and did indeed 'do his very best' to fashion his rude piece of oak into the delicate form of Erin's emblematic leaf. Early in the morning, late at night, and at every spare moment during the day, he practised his task perseveringly. Sometimes his patience was sorely tried. He found the fine even veining of the leaves most difficult to imitate, and giving the slender curling stem its proper form cost him the spoiling of several half-finished shamrocks. But what will not patient perseverance accomplish? Encouraged by the wish to perform his promise, and by the real pleasure which he took in the work, Charles, on the evening before the expiration of the fortnight, displayed to the admiring eyes of Ellen and little Mary two beautiful shamrocks, in size and form closely imitating the natural leaf. Having obtained permission from his master, he set out next morning, after a very scanty breakfast, to walk to town,

carrying the bracelet and his own precious shamrocks in his waistcoat pocket.

He entered Mr Martin's shop. Miss Elwyn had not yet arrived; but Charles, longing to display his workmanship to the good-natured jeweller, put his hand in his pocket. Out came the bracelet, then the penknife, but no shamrocks. In terror he searched again: no sign of them, but what, alas! explained their disappearance—a small hole in the worn lining, which Ellen had forgotten to mend.

The boy burst into tears—he could not help it. 'After all my trouble!' he exclaimed; 'and indeed they were very nice! I'm thankful anyway,' he continued, after a pause, during which the sympathising jeweller tried to comfort him, 'that it was not the lady's bracelet I lost. Will you ask her, sir, to trust me for one week longer? Please God I'll make two more, and maybe better ones.'

Mr Martin promised to do as he wished; and then, with a firm, though sad heart, Charles returned to his poor home. I shall not dwell upon the various expressions of disappointment with which his hungry relatives greeted him, nor describe how poor Ellen reproached herself for not having mended 'that nasty hole.' Suffice it to say, that Charles set resolutely to work, and by the end of the week, had carved two shamrocks superior in finish to the former ones.

Again he went to Mr Martin's, and now no sorrow awaited him. Miss Elwyn came, and was greatly delighted with the little ornaments—they were indeed exact fac-similes of her own. Her uncle, a benevolent-looking old gentleman, was with her. He watched the sparkling eyes and pale intelligent countenance of Charles, while his niece expressed her approbation of the carving.

'Well, my boy,' he said, 'we are indebted to you for

two favours—the restoration of my gold coin, and the mending of my niece's bracelet. Here is a pound-note for your shamrocks; I won't offer you money for your honesty—*that* is a commodity which cannot and ought not to be purchased; but I give you my confidence and approbation, which perhaps may be worth something.'

For a moment Charles could not speak. 'O sir,' he said, ''tis too much; I couldn't take such a sum for two little leaves.'

His objections, however, were soon overruled; and then, with a thankful heart, he pictured to himself the joy and plenty which he would carry home that night.

'Now,' said Mr Elwyn, 'it is evident, my lad, that you have a decided talent for carving wood, and, what is better, a disposition to persevere. Would you like to learn to be an architect, and have to do with erecting stone buildings and oaken carvings on a large scale?'

'O yes, sir, indeed I would.'

'Then I have a friend, a good man, and a first-rate builder, with whom I shall place you as a pupil; and it will be your own fault, not mine or his, if you don't prosper. My niece tells me you have a sister and a sick little cousin; we must do something for them also.'

The boy could not find words to express his gratitude, but his speaking countenance and tearful eyes were sufficiently eloquent. The next day Mr and Miss Elwyn, accompanied by their friend, Mr Davis, the architect, paid a visit to Tom Handley's cabin. Greatly moved by the poverty he witnessed, Mr Elwyn not only supplied the family's present necessities, but placed them in a small farm of his own, which had just fallen out of lease—at the same time strongly impressing on Tom and his wife the necessity for economy and order as well as industry. Taught by their late sufferings, the lesson was not lost;

and after the lapse of a few years, they became quite rich for persons in their class of life. But this is anticipating.

Good surgical assistance was procured for little Mary, which, with nourishment and warm clothing, under the blessing of God, quite restored her limb; so that ere long Miss Elwyn was able to place her, with her cousin Ellen, in an excellent institution provided for the education of girls.

Years passed on, happily and industriously spent; and now, at the time I write, Charles Murphy is a rising architect, well known and respected for his talents and probity. He lives near the city in a neat house; and few could recognise in the fair young wife whom he has lately brought home, the sickly 'little Mary,' for whose amusement long ago he fashioned the cup and ball.

When I last heard of them, Ellen was about to be married to a physician in good practice; and Charles was actively engaged in promoting, by his influence and exertions, an extensive manufactory of bog-oak ornaments, which promises to give employment to many a boy as poor and friendless as he was on the day when he first tried to carve a BOG-OAK SHAMROCK.

# THE MENZIKOFF FAMILY.

CLOSE to the Kremlin at Moscow was to be seen, about the end of the seventeenth century, the shop of a pastry-cook of the name of Menzikoff, famous for making a kind of honey-cake in great request amongst the Russians. This Menzikoff had a son, who, though a mere boy, from his quickness and intelligence was most useful to his father. It was his business to sell the cakes; and he might be seen in every quarter of the city with a basket, which he was often fortunate enough to empty three or four times in the day. On some occasions, however, he was unsuccessful in disposing of his merchandise; and when thus bringing home again part of what he had carried out, he used to steal into his little room to avoid meeting his father, who in such cases would fly into a passion, and send him to bed supperless, and perhaps, in addition to this punishment, beat him severely. And never was chastisement more unjust; for Alexander did his very best to sell his cakes, repairing to the most public walks, and the doors of the principal churches, traversing the streets and the thoroughfares, till at length he was well known to all the inhabitants of

Moscow—nay, even to the Czar Peter himself, who condescended, while buying cakes from him, to chat with him, and laugh at his lively sallies and quick repartees.

Brought thus into contact with princes and nobles, the sight of the luxury and magnificence that surrounded them soon inspired the young Menzikoff with a disgust of his trade sufficiently strong to make him long to throw aside his basket, and bid adieu for ever to his cakes. But his aspirations had scarcely taken the form of hope, so vague were they, and so little probability did there appear of any change of condition. Little did he imagine that fortune was even then about to take him by the hand, to raise him to the highest pinnacle.

One day his father received an order for cakes from a nobleman, who was giving an entertainment to several of the courtiers of the czar. Alexander was of course the bearer of them. Admitted to the banqueting-room, he sees a large company, all of whom had indulged in copious libations, and the greater number of whom were quite intoxicated. To Alexander's astonishment, in the midst of the jingle of glasses, and the clamour of drunken riot, he hears threatening words against the czar. A vast conspiracy exists to expel him from the throne, got up by the Princess Sophia, whose ambition could not be satisfied in the obscurity of the convent in which her brother Peter obliged her to remain. The very next day the conspirators were to carry into effect their terrible plot. Alexander hesitates not one moment; he glides unnoticed from the room, and hastens to the palace. He is surrounded on his arrival by the guards, to whom he is well known.

'Good-day, Menzikoff; what brings you here without your cakes?'

'Talk not of cakes!' he answered, panting and breath-

less, and almost wild with terror: 'I must see the czar; I must speak to him, and that on the instant!'

'A mighty great man truly to speak to the czar: he has other things to do besides listening to your foolery.'

'In the name of all you love best, for the sake of great St Nicholas, our patron saint, take me to the czar; every moment lost may be the cause of frightful misfortunes. If you hinder me from seeing the emperor, you will repent it all your life.'

Surprised at his urgency, one of the guards determined to go to the emperor and ascertain his pleasure concerning him. Peter, always accessible to the meanest of his subjects, ordered Menzikoff to be admitted. 'Well, Alexander, and what have you got to say so very important?'

'My lord,' cried the boy, throwing himself at the prince's feet, 'your life is at stake if you delay a single hour. Only a few paces from your palace they are conspiring against you: they have sworn to have your life.'

'I will not give them time,' answered Peter smiling. 'Come, rise, and be my guide. Remember only that you must be silent as the grave upon all you already know and all that may happen. Your future fortunes depend on your discretion.'

With these words the emperor wrapped himself in a cloak, and repaired *alone* to the house where the conspirators were assembled. A few minutes' pause at the door of the room gave him, in the words he overheard, sufficient proof of the truth of Menzikoff's report, and he suddenly entered the room. The conspirators, supposing that his guards were at his back, fell on their knees before him, imploring pardon at the very moment that his life was in their hands.

From that day might be dated the brilliant fortunes of

the young Menzikoff. Peter, grateful for the service he had rendered him, kept him about his person, and gave him all the educational advantages within his reach. And well did he profit by them, acquiring in a short time several languages, and such skill in arms, and knowledge of state affairs, that he soon became necessary to the czar, who never went anywhere without him. When on his return from Holland, Peter wished to carry out those plans of social amelioration at which he had been labouring for so many years, he found in Menzikoff a second self, able and willing to co-operate with him in all his projects. Such signal services soon obtained for him the government of Ingria, the rank of prince, and in 1702 the title of major-general. He was then five-and-twenty years of age.

War having been declared against Poland, Menzikoff signalised himself in several battles, and attained to the highest offices. But was he happy? No: the perpetual fears of a reverse that haunted him, the consciousness that he was an object of jealousy and envy to all who surrounded him, robbed him of anything like tranquillity of mind. Every thought was absorbed in the unceasing effort to maintain his elevated rank, now only second to that of the emperor himself. But he was even now ill; he might die; what, then, would become of the favourite Menzikoff? Would his successor extend to him the same countenance? This thought pressing upon him perpetually, induced him to try and find out from the emperor what his intentions were as to the succession to the throne; but the prince was so much offended by the attempt, which he had too much penetration not to perceive, that as a punishment he deprived him of the principality of Pleskoff. Menzikoff was fully aware that his fate was bound up with that of the Empress Catharine,

over whose mind he had always had great influence, and in concert with her he gained over all parties to favour her succession to the throne after the demise of her husband. No sooner were Peter's eyes closed in death, than Menzikoff seized on the treasury and citadel, and proclaimed Catharine empress under the name of Catharine I.

The czarina proved herself no ungrateful mistress; she ordered her stepson Peter, whom she had named as her successor, to marry the daughter of Menzikoff; and through the same influence a marriage was also agreed upon between the son of the latter and the Princess Anna. Both couples were betrothed; and Menzikoff, left nothing to desire, thought himself henceforth secure from all reverses; but it was not long before he experienced the proverbial inconstancy of fortune. All his efforts to place his power on a solid basis proved fruitless; the sudden death of Catharine I., which took place two years after that of her husband, entirely changed the aspect of affairs. Peter II. ascended the throne, and soon the impending storm burst upon his head. The Dolgorouki family were the counsellors and favourites of the new monarch, and they had long been the enemies of Menzikoff. They excited in the czar's mind a jealousy of the power of his intended father-in-law, and succeeded not only in breaking off the projected marriages, but in procuring the banishment of Menzikoff to his estate of Reuneburg, about two hundred and fifty leagues from Moscow. But their hatred was not yet satisfied: his wealth alone gave him formidable power; he might reappear at court; and they now represented to the czar in the most odious light the pomp and splendour which Menzikoff had been imprudent enough to display in the removal of his family from Moscow; and the ruin of the unhappy man was

irrevocably sealed. At some distance from Moscow a detachment of soldiers, commanded by one of his bitter enemies, came up with him, and a decree was shewn to Menzikoff condemning him for the rest of his life to Siberia, stripped of all his honours and wealth. He was made to alight from his carriage, and after he and his wife and children had been compelled to put on the coarse garb of peasants, they were placed in the covered carts which were to convey them to their place of exile.

Who can paint the despair of the unhappy Menzikoff! A few short days before, he held the second rank in the state, under an emperor whose throne his daughter was to share; and now, stripped of his possessions, of liberty, of hope, he was borne along in a wretched vehicle to the horrible place where he was henceforth to drag out his miserable existence! As a favour, the emperor sent him to the circle of Ischim, called the 'Italy of Siberia,' because a few days of summer are known in it, the winter lasting only eight months; but that winter is intensely cold, though not as long as in the other parts of the country. The north wind is continually blowing, and comes charged with ice from the deserts of the north pole; so that from the month of September till the end of May the river Tobol is completely frozen over, and the snow thickly covers its rude and desolate banks.

Immediately on his arrival in Siberia, Menzikoff was put in possession of an *isba* (the Russian name for the peasant's hovel), situated in a very remote district of the gloomy region, and there he was subjected to the strictest watch. He was forbidden, with his family, to pass beyond a certain prescribed limit, even to go to church. A few days after their installation in their wretched abode, some cows and sheep, and a quantity of fowls, were brought to Menzikoff, without any intimation to

whom he was indebted for this act of kindness. It was indeed an alleviation of his sad fate, not only as an addition to his physical comfort, but as inspiring a cheering hope, by shewing that he had friends who still remembered and were interested in him. Perhaps their zeal to serve him would not stop here. This feeble ray of hope sufficed to cheer the unhappy family, and impart to them some degree of fortitude for the endurance of their misery; and Menzikoff steadily devoted himself to the cultivation of the ground which was to be the support of beings so dear to his heart. But new trials awaited him. The health of his beloved wife gave way under the sad reverse and unwonted privations of her new situation, and a short time after their arrival she died. Menzikoff, in his despairing grief, would have soon followed her; but the thought of his helpless children bade him live to be their guide and stay. Religion now imparted to his mind that elevation and fortitude which it alone can give; he now knew the fleeting nature, the nothingness of the riches and honours of which a moment sufficed to deprive him; and he submitted with resignation to his fate, finding in prayer and in the affection of his family his sweetest consolation. But his cup of sorrow was not yet full: his three children were attacked at the same time by the small-pox. His son and one of his daughters recovered; but the eldest, she who had been betrothed to the czar, fell a victim to the fearful disorder. The unhappy father could not bear this fresh bereavement: he sunk under his grief on the 2d of November 1729, after two years' abode amid the snows of Siberia.

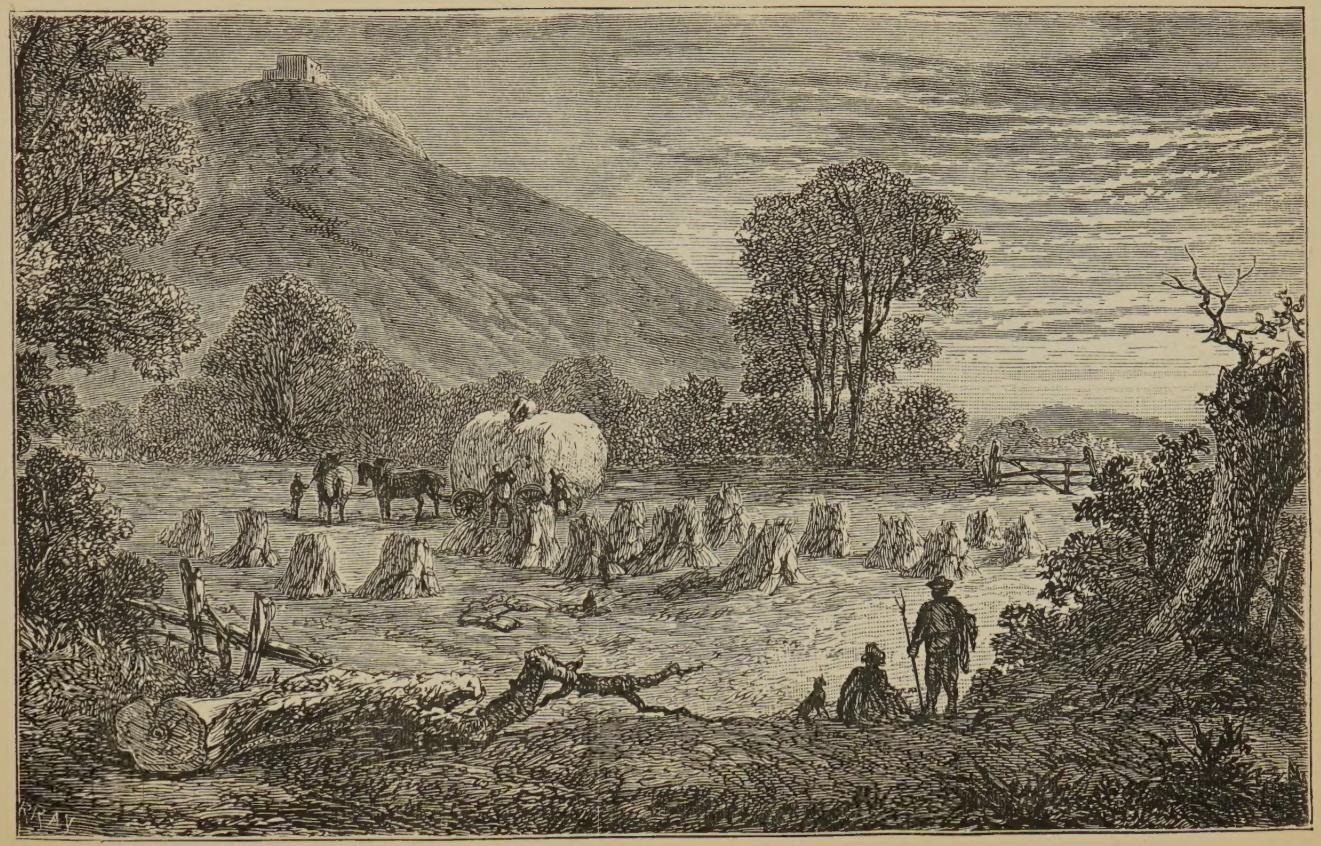
The death of Menzikoff caused some relaxation in the severity of the government, and a little more liberty was now allowed to the two children; such as permission to go on Sundays to divine service at the town of Ischim, a

considerable distance from their isba; but they were not allowed the gratification of being together—the brother going one day, and the sister the next.

Three years elapsed without any change in the situation of the young Menzikoffs; but now events occurred that totally altered the aspect of affairs at the court of Russia. Peter II. died without issue, and Anna, the eldest daughter of Peter I., ascended the throne. The solicitations of the friends of the unhappy family found a ready response from the compassion she herself felt for them, and an edict soon received her signature, recalling the young Menzikoff and his sister from banishment, and permitting their return to Moscow. The young creatures, far from expecting such a change, passed their days in cultivating their farm, and alternately availing themselves of their weekly privilege of going to church at Ischim.

One day, when the young girl was returning as usual alone, as she was passing a cabin, a man put his head out of the little hole that served as a window, and called her by name, and then made himself known as Dolgorouki, the enemy of her father, the author of all the misfortunes of her family, now in his turn a victim to court intrigues. She was hastening home to inform her brother of this fresh instance of the instability of human greatness, when, as she approached the house, she saw a government jäger, escorted by a band of soldiers, at the door. Her heart sickened with the apprehension of some new misfortune, and her trembling limbs were unable to bear her farther, when her brother ran out to meet her. 'Joy, sister, joy!' he cried; 'Heaven has at last had pity on us. Our gracious sovereign restores us to our home and our country. Here is an order from the Czarina Anna recalling us to court, and putting us in possession of the fifth part of our poor father's property.'

For wonder and joy, the young girl could not believe that she heard aright; and it was not till she actually had the document put into her hands that restored them to liberty and to their country, that she could be persuaded that she was not the sport of illusion. But once assured, she stood motionless, breathless, under a revulsion so mighty, so sudden. Then came the thought of her father, of her mother, of all they had suffered; and the first joy was soon mingled and tempered with pensive regret. It was with eyes dimmed with the tears of memory that she met her brother's glance beaming with hope, as on the day fixed for their departure they got into the carriage that was to convey them to Moscow, after having paid a last visit to the grave of their parents, and made over to Dolgorouki their isba and all that it contained. The czarina received them most graciously, and gave to Menzikoff the place of captain of her guard, and that of tire-woman to his sister. Soon after she richly endowed her, on the occasion of her marriage with one of the most powerful nobles of her court.



FORTUNES OF A FARMER'S BOY.

# FORTUNES OF A FARMER'S BOY.

FRANÇOIS RICHARD was born in 1765, in the obscure little hamlet of Trelat, commune of D'Epinay, in France. He was the son of a poor farmer, who shared the hardships at that time the common lot of the agriculturist—hardships that can scarcely be conceived by those who know not what habit, patience, and, still more, Christian resignation, can enable men to endure. His early years, though passed in poverty, obscurity, and retirement, were yet full of excitement; his young and ardent imagination was for ever devising new projects; and even his sports and childish tricks betrayed his speculative turn of mind. At twelve years old, he gave himself up to the rearing of pigeons, and carried on a little trade in them, with success sufficient to encourage and stimulate his spirit of enterprise. But his dovecot gave umbrage to the lord of the soil, and he was compelled to sell it to him, receiving for it a sum equal to about thirty-five shillings. Richard thought himself a rich man, and resolving to have some enjoyment from his wealth, he purchased leather shoes, which, amongst those who knew only the wooden shoe of the peasant, made him be looked upon as almost a gentleman.

Richard had nothing so much at heart as being no longer a burden to his father, whose poverty was indeed a grief to him. After the sale of his dovecot, he commenced speculating in dogs. This new trade gave him in a short time the means of procuring decent clothing; so that, by his rustic finery, he threw his school-fellows as far into the shade as he had already done in much better things, by his progress in useful knowledge. Before he had attained his thirteenth year, he was qualified for the appointment of registrar to the cattle-market of Villiers le Bocage.

At seventeen, he mentioned to his father his desire to quit the paternal roof for a sphere larger and better adapted for realising the objects of his ambition. His father made no objection; but when the moment of separation came, he found himself obliged to confess that, in a time of great distress, he had expended the greater part of the savings which Richard had intrusted to his care, and that he had now not more than twelve francs (ten shillings) to give him. This communication did not discourage our enterprising youth. He took a most affectionate leave of his father, and assuring him that he was only too glad to leave him this little earnest of the prosperity which he hoped yet to work out for him, set off with his new clothes in his bag and his ten shillings in his pocket. He arrived at the chief town of Normandy with a light purse, but with as light a heart, buoyant with hope and with a spirit of enterprise and determination that defied all difficulties. He deemed himself fortunate in at once obtaining the situation of clerk to a petty merchant; but unhappily for him, his master was a rude, ignorant, and avaricious man, incapable of appreciating such a mind as that of Richard. He made the young Norman his servant rather than his clerk. So long as it

was only a matter of cleaning horses, helping to cook, and waiting at table, the youth made no complaint; but at length his master having bought a new equipage, in order to make a suitable figure in some civic ceremonial, wanted him to act as footman; but shrinking from this public exhibition, he positively refused, and quitted the house of the merchant.

And now his 'thought by day, his dream by night,' was to get to Paris, where he might attain his darling object of acquiring a knowledge of mercantile business. But for this money was necessary, and to procure it, Richard became a waiter at a small coffee-house, where for one year he steadily laid by everything he received, till he found he had in halfpence a sum sufficient for his journey. Arrived in the capital, it was not very easy for a poor youth, without either friend or relative in Paris, to find the means of subsistence. After many unsuccessful efforts to get into a merchant's employment, he was obliged to resume the apron in a coffee-house kept by one of his countrymen. The perquisites there being much more considerable than at Rouen, he found himself, at the end of the year, the possessor of forty pounds and a few shillings. Nothing could henceforth check his progress: he devoted his little store to the purchase of some pieces of English dimity, a manufacture then unknown to France, and hawked them about till he disposed of all most advantageously. He renewed his stock as fast as it was exhausted; and when, after a year's labour, he summed up his accounts, he found a balance in his favour of one thousand pounds!

Richard continued his trade till 1789, when, by a fraudulent trick of an agent employed by him, his industry was suddenly checked by the loss of his whole stock. He was even arrested for an alleged debt of sixty

pounds. He could easily have paid this sum, and recovered his liberty; but his honest and independent mind revolted from every species of injustice: he knew that he had not incurred the debt, and he preferred remaining in prison to allowing roguery to triumph.

The revolutionary convulsions that afterwards shook society to its very foundations were now beginning in France. On the 13th of July the riot broke out, and after pillaging the house of the manufacturer Reveillon, the mob fell upon La Force, where Richard was confined, broke it open, and set the prisoners free. Once again was Richard in the streets of Paris, with a toilet somewhat more neglected than usual, and twelve sous in his pocket; but he remembered his father's twelve francs, and thanked God and took courage. The house in which he had lodged his money had stopped payment during his imprisonment; but he borrowed a few crowns, resumed his old trade of hawker, and six months after, his credit was re-established, and his trade flourishing. He now thought he might extend his operations, and took a large establishment in the Rue Française, and in 1792 was rich enough to purchase a domain near Nemours. But the revolutionary storm now broke forth in its full fury; and Richard, whose peaceable disposition shrunk from the sanguinary struggles that rent his country, soon saw that a considerable time must elapse before there could be any security for trade, or any field for commercial enterprise. He accordingly settled his accounts, closed his warehouse, and, accompanied by his wife, Marie Alavoine, whom he had married in 1790, went to visit his father, and happily arrived at the very time that afforded him another opportunity of proving he had not forgotten the pledge he had given on leaving the home of his boyhood, of being yet the means of prosperity to his aged parent. The trans-

ports of joy at his unexpected arrival had not yet subsided, when two bailiffs entered the house with a warrant to distrain. The father had become security for the toll-collector, and the old proverb was found true in this case —the surety was obliged to pay; and the old man's goods would have been seized but for Richard's fortunate arrival and interposition.

When the madness of the people was somewhat calmed down, he returned to Paris, and to fresh speculations. A very short time after his return, he became acquainted with a young merchant of the name of Lenoir-Dufresne. These two superior minds at once understood each other, and a partnership was entered into which was to end only with the death of one of the parties, so long known and respected as the firm of Richard and Lenoir.

There were many points of resemblance between the two partners. Both possessed the same acuteness and almost intuitive tact in business, but the perhaps too boldly speculative mind of Richard found a happy counterbalance in the coolness and steadiness of Lenoir. Their trade was principally in English manufactures; and so extensive did it become, and so wonderfully did it prosper, that, two years after their partnership commenced, they had realised on the two hundred and forty pounds which they had invested a net profit of four thousand five hundred and sixty pounds.

And now Richard conceived a noble project indeed—the introduction into France of the cotton manufacture, hitherto monopolised by England; and his perseverance, aided by an apparent accident, happily obtained for him the means of accomplishing his purpose. Having ripped some calico, he perceived, to his surprise, on weighing a certain quantity of thread, that a piece valued at three pounds six shillings and eightpence, took only ten shillings

worth of the raw material! What a profit for the manufacturer! From that instant he hesitated no longer: his purpose was fixed and irrevocable. However, not wishing to do anything without his partner's consent, he communicated his project to Lenoir-Dufresne, who at first tried to dissuade him from attempting so bold and novel a plan; but seeing that his determination was not to be shaken, finally left him at full liberty, though declining any interference. Richard's first step was the purchase of one hundredweight of cotton, and to get some looms made after the rough plans given him by a poor English mechanic. They were set up in a shop in the Rue de Bellefonds. The first essay was crowned with complete success in every point but the stamping of the calicoes; and as the printing of them was indispensable to their being saleable, Richard employed three months in endeavours to discover the secret of this process; but his efforts were vain; till at length his partner, whose prejudices had been removed, and who began to take an interest in the manufacture, gave him a clue to the discovery.

The manufacture now became so sought after, as to make the want of machinery sensibly felt. Richard was anxiously devising some mode of procuring a model of the English machine now so well known under the name of spinning-jenny, when he was again fortunate enough to meet with an Englishman, who, in less than three months, constructed twenty-two of these frames; and as their former premises were now too narrow for this addition, the two partners took from the government a spacious mansion in the Rue de Thougny; and the house, once the abode of luxury and wealth, was suddenly metamorphosed into the workshop of the poor but industrious artisans. The number employed now

became so great, that they were soon obliged to add to their concerns a large convent in the neighbourhood. A few days after, Napoleon came to visit their establishment; and he was so struck with the completeness of the novel machinery, with the clearness of Richard's judgment, the elevation of his views, and the boldness with which he laboured for the commercial freedom of France, that he offered any encouragement he yet needed; and on finding that their establishment was not even yet large enough, he gave a grant of another convent at the opposite side of the street.

The manufactory of Richard and Lenoir now assumed an almost colossal importance, realising a monthly profit of one thousand six hundred pounds. The indefatigable Richard set up successively three hundred spinning-jennies in different villages of Picardy, forty at Alençon, and one hundred in the Abbey of St Martin. Nor was his native province forgotten, for he opened a manufactory there which gave bread to six hundred workmen. Neither did his enlightened benevolence stop here. Incessant were his efforts to raise those in his employment in the social scale, by placing educational advantages within their reach.

For more than ten years, Richard and Lenoir seemed to mount from step to step to the pinnacle of human prosperity. But in 1806, a sad and unexpected event broke up a partnership which might have served as a model; so perfect was the agreement, yet so remarkable the combination of opposite qualities of mind to the most beneficial results. Lenoir died suddenly, and Richard found himself alone at the head of the establishment; and having no one now to restrain him, he gave full scope to his gigantic views. He set up two more factories at Caen and Laigle, which made the number

under his superintendence amount to six, all in admirable order, and provided with every essential for working. But one object of his ambition still remained to be attained: he wished France to be no longer obliged to import the raw material from countries that did not acknowledge her sway. In Napoleon's career of conquest, Italy had now become, as it were, but an appendage of his vast empire; and it was to the generous soil of Naples that Richard purposed confiding his cotton plantation. Seeds were often found in the bales of cotton coming from America, and these he had now carefully collected, and when he had got a sufficient quantity, he conveyed them to Castellamare, where they succeeded entirely.

Up to this point Richard could only be regarded as the most encouraging example of the union of persevering industry with bold and enterprising genius. It is to be regretted that he must serve also as a warning against speculations that now took the character of rashness. The union between Holland and France threw an immense quantity of cotton goods into the market, and Richard could no longer find sale for what he had on hands; and with six factories perpetually at work, the quantity manufactured was very great. This was the origin of his first difficulties. Vainly did his friends urge him to close some of his establishments for a short time; vainly did his confidential clerk entreat him to strike a balance, and retire from trade: 'You have done enough for France, and nobly maintained your reputation; think now of your interests, and of taking the rest you have so well earned.' Richard was deaf to every argument, and continued manufacturing in ruinous quantities.

His involvements increased to an overwhelming degree, and he was obliged to have recourse to the Emperor, to

whom he frankly stated his situation. Napoleon, who had ever respected him, and had but very lately conferred upon him the cross of the Legion of Honour, did not keep him long in suspense; and a loan of fifteen hundred thousand francs enabled him to meet the immediate demands upon him. But the great cause of the evil still remained, and Richard at length thought of adopting the manufacture of wool instead of that of cotton. This new undertaking succeeded at first, and was attended with considerable profits; but soon fresh disaster occurred; and when the year 1813 arrived, so pregnant with reverse of fortune to the Emperor, ruin was impending over the enterprising manufacturer.

But personal anxieties were not suffered to make him indifferent to the fate of his fellow-citizens. When in the defence of Paris against the enemy's troops a number of men had been wounded and conveyed to hospital, Richard in visiting them, saw that they were lying on the bare ground. He immediately supplied, at his own expense, eight hundred straw-beds, and employed the boiler of his bleach-house at Bon Secours to make broth, daily carried to them by his servants and clerks, who attended on them in the hospitals. We need scarcely say that this heavy expense was incurred without either expectation or desire of indemnification.

And now the troops of the allied sovereigns took possession of Paris, entering it on the 31st of March. Richard, though greatly attached to Bonaparte, from his kindness to himself personally, and therefore deeply grieved at his fallen fortunes, yet saw clearly that the fate of thousands of his dependants was involved in protection being extended to his manufactories by the restored Bourbons, and therefore he did not refuse to head the legion he commanded, when it was ordered out to receive

the Count d'Artois at the barriers. But any hopes he might have entertained of their patronage were fallacious. The exhausted state of the public finances at the restoration, besides many other reasons, compelled the Bourbons to yield to the demand of England, that the duty upon cotton should be altogether taken off. The bill to that effect, which was passed without any clause of indemnity to the present holders of stock, found Richard with a fortune of eight millions, and rendered him poorer than when he first left his native village.

Even in this extremity, Richard, supported by his perseverance and fortitude, did not despair. He resolved to hold on, though now less to maintain his commercial reputation, than not to plunge into utter destitution the twenty thousand workmen in his employment. But he had soon exhausted all his own resources, and he was obliged to have recourse to loans, for which so high an interest was exacted, that in a little time his ruin was complete. He at length retreated from his struggle with adverse circumstances, almost penniless, yet respected and esteemed by his fellow-citizens. But the change from almost incessant activity, to a life which seemed to him now without an object, was too sudden and too great. He had now to struggle with all the privations of poverty; and the bent and furrowed brow, once so clear, so open—the pale, melancholy features, once so animated—proved how utterly this blow had prostrated all the energy of his character. It was not till October 1839, nearly twenty years after the ruin of his fortunes, that death put a period to his mental suffering. His remains were followed to the grave by a numerous assemblage of those very workmen to whom he had been not merely a patron, but a father; and many were their tears of heartfelt sorrow.

# THE BLIND FIDDLER.

ONE dismally foggy and rainy afternoon in November last, when the streets, clothed in a viscid garment of thick and slippery mud, were passable only at a snail's pace, because every step forward sent you half a step back again—when no one whom fate, or equally inexorable business, did not drive forth, ventured to brave the misty atmosphere fraught with catarrh and influenza—I heard the sound of a fiddle outside my window. The strain was a melancholy attempt at a Scotch reel; and the incongruity of the spectacle it conjured up to my imagination compared with the actual scene before my eyes had just awaked me to the perception of the comic, when the music ceased on a sudden in the middle of the second stave, and I heard the sound of a fall; and a faint ejaculation, half-sigh, half-groan, which immediately followed, brought me to the door to see what was the matter.

It was already getting dark, independently of the fog, and I could but dimly discern a dusky mass lying by the garden gate; but I could hear the plaintive moans that proceeded from it, and soon, with the help of Betty, whom I had summoned to my assistance, got the wretched

bundle of humanity into a chair in front of the glowing kitchen fire. A few spoonfuls of diluted brandy soon brought life and animation into a weather-beaten face, and produced from livid lips the eager, almost savage request: 'Give me a bit of vittles!'

'When did you eat last?'

'Not since yesterday morning. I had a bit of bread yesterday morning.'

'Oh!' said Betty, 'ain't that horrid, and he a blind man—as blind as a stone?' Giving the necessary directions, I left Betty to manage her blind patient in her own way, and in about an hour afterwards went down to see what improvement she had effected.

The poor fellow, having satisfied the demands of nature, and supplied his own wants, had immediately begun to attend to those of his inseparable companion—his cracked, patched, and dilapidated fiddle. I found him airing it tenderly before the fire; then, having borrowed a cloth from Betty, he employed himself in cleansing the crazy instrument from the moist breath of the fog, and from the contaminations it had picked up through his fall. This accomplished, he began feeling it all over as cautiously as a surgeon does the body of a patient in search of a fracture. Fortunately there was no serious mischief done, and the poor fellow laughed cheerfully when he discovered that the only friend he had in the world had escaped unhurt.

'Well, my man,' said I, 'how do you get on? Not hungry now, I hope?'

'Bless 'ee, sir, no! I'm righter than a trivet now, sir. I ha'nt had sich a feed I can't tell 'ee when, sir. I'm very much obleeged to you, sir, sure*ly*. I wor altogether done up, and that's a fact.'

'Well, then, perhaps you have no objection to return

the favour we have done you by telling me how you came to be a blind fiddler, what you get by it, how you manage to live, and all about it!'

'Not a bit of objection in the world, sir, if you likes to hear it. There ain't much fun in what I got to tell though, cos I ha'nt had much luck in my time; but if you wish to hear it, of course you shall, and I'll begin at the beginning. I'm quite agreeable, sir.

With that, laying his fiddle to rest in an old black bag which he drew from the crown of a crushed hat, and settling his arms on the elbows of the chair, so as to rest his whole frame in a state of unaccustomed luxury, he delivered himself literally, with the exception of certain circumlocutions which I have thought fit to digest into something like order and consecutiveness, pretty much to the following effect:

'I ain't but a youngish man, sir, though they do tell me that I looks a reg'lar old file. What might you suppose my age, sir?'

'From forty-eight to fifty, or thereabouts.'

'There 'tis agin. Everybody says I'm fifty, when I'm not forty yet. I was born you see, sir, in Swan Alley, not far from the Artillery Ground. My father wor a shoemaker—perhaps I ought to say a cobbler, for he didn't make many shoes: good reason why, he was always a mendin' on 'em. When I was a very little un, I rek'lect partik'lar they was a-makin' the Regent's Canal as runs under the City Road, and I used to get out afore I was big enough to wear trousers, and make mud-pies out of the clay as was turned up. That was the best fun I ever knowed, that was; but didn't I get the strap when my father catched me at it? Ah, I knows what strap-sauce is well enough! He wanted to teach me—cos I was the biggest boy—to make wax-ends, and I wanted to

make mud-pies; and many's the lickin' I got along o' that there canal a-diggin'. I never passes the bridge now without thinkin' on it. Then, you know, I could see—had as good use of my eyes as anybody. Ha! well! 'taint no use grievin'.

'Mother died, and left four on us when I was about five years old, and then we got more strap and less vittles, I can tell 'ee. Father got savage, an' took to drinkin', and we never dared to have a bit o' lark 'cept when he was out-o'-doors. One night, when he was gone to the public-house, we was all a-playin' and larkin' in the room, and my brother, out o' fun, pushed me right over the kit into the fire. I fell with my face slap in the middle of the hot coals, and was so frightened that I couldn't make no attempt to get out, cos my legs was up in the air again' the kit. My two brothers and sisters sung out a good un, and a ooman as lived up-stairs came down and picked me out. I was took off to the hospital, where I laid for seven months, and a'most died wi' brain-fever. Then I was sent home again, stone-blind, and father gave me a hidin' for tumblin' into the fire, as if I hadn't had punishment enough. But I didn't care much for that. I had friends in the court, among the women and the gals, and I got a deal more vittles and kindness than I did afore.

'When I was old enough, I was sent to the Blind Asylum, where I learned to make baskets and mats. I can make clothes-baskets and hampers, and that sort of work, well enough; but the trade is so much cut up by the shops that it ain't worth doin'. If I makes a basket for a washerwoman for three shillins, it costs me half-a-crown for the willows. It ain't much better with the mats—the rope costs almost the money they fetch. I left the asylum when I was sixteen, and lived along with

another blind man as made hampers for the wine-merchants. He had a pretty good trade, and I might ha' done well along of him if I could ha' carr'd home the goods; but it ain't no go for a blind man to get about the streets o' London wi' five or six hampers on his head. I tried it once or twice, and got shoved head foremost into a butcher's shop by some chaps as wanted a lark; so he couldn't send me out no more, and he couldn't go hisself. I had two years of that there hamper-work, and got the rheumatiz dreadful through workin' in a damp cellar all day long, and I was obliged to give it up—to go into the hospital again.

'When I came out I didn't know where to go, and what I was to do. My father had moved away somewhere, and my two brothers had gone to sea. So I went to my parish, and had a go of the workhouse for matter of a year. There was a blind man in there as played the fiddle uncommon well, and the overseer made him shew me a bit, and paid a goodish bit o' money for teachin' of me. I scraped away whenever they would let me, for I wanted to get out of the workhouse, and I picked up a tidy lot of tunes in four or five months. By the time I'd been at it a year, I thought I might manage to pick up a livin', and I turned out one mornin', when the summer was a-comin' on, and began fiddlin' in the streets. I didn't get much the first day—not quite sixpence I think 'twas—but I wouldn't go back upon the parish. I could lodge for a shillin' a week, and I could get a bit of broken vittles at times when folks wouldn't give me no money. I liked my liberty too well, after the confinement—first of the damp cellar, then of the hospital, and then in the workhouse—and I made up my mind to get my own livin' without bein' beholden to nobody. So I've a-fiddled pretty well ever since.

'When I were two-and-twenty, I took it into my head uncommon as how I should like to learn to read; so I went and applied at the Blind School in Red Lion Square, and used to go there and learn to read two or three nights of a week. There was a good many there, and some on 'em learned to read very well, and some couldn't learn nohow. I got on tolerablish. I went to the school more nor a year. We didn't pay nothin' for teachin'—only for the books: the books is very dear; the letters sticks up, and we feels 'em with our fingers. I gave four shillins for Izayer. I can read all on it, and John's Gospel too. That's all I got. I can't afford to buy no more.

'At the Blind School I fell in with a young ooman as was learnin' to read. I kep company with her for five year, and then I married her. We've a been married nigh upon twelve year. She was born blind—never had no eyes in her head, not at all. She can do everything in a house as well a'most as them as can see: she can cook a meal's vittles beautiful, when we got it to be cooked. She sews with her needle, and mends my clothes, and does the washin' and ironin'. We are often very bad off, partik'lar at this time of the year. People don't care much about fiddlin' and music in cold and wet weather: they walks away to keep theirselves warm; and forgits to give a fellar a copper.

'I knows London all over 'cept some of the new streets, and I knows them when I been through 'em once. I goes from Islington, where I lives, to the City, three times a week. When I come to a street where a customer of mine lives, I begins and numbers the houses with my stick, and then I strikes up when I comes to the house, and plays till I gets my penny or my bread and cheese. I always eats a piece of bread in the mornin'

afore I goes out: if I don't, I gits the stomach-ache. Sometimes I don't git no more all the day; but I gits bread and cheese at a house in Clerkenwell every Tuesday, and a good pint o' tea and a poun' a'most o' bread every Friday in Little St Thomas Apostle. You see I can't fiddle very well, cos my right arm is shrivelled up wi' the fire, and I can't draw the bow rightly level with the bridge athout I sits down; and in course I can't sit down while I am walkin' about the streets; so it ain't many coppers I gits from chance customers. My reg'lar customers mostly gives me a penny a week: when they moves, I follers 'em wherever they goes: I can't afford to lose 'em; they brings me in, all on 'em, about three-and-sixpence a week, besides the vittles. 'Taint much vittles I eats at home, save on Sundays, and a bit o' bread for breakfast afore I starts out of a mornin'.

'There's lots o' blind men in London as gets a livin' without earnin' of it. I knows one as sits all day in the City Road a-readin' the Bible wi' his finger, and people thinks it's wonderful clever, and gives him a sight o' money. A poun' a week ain't nothin' to him. But that there's a imposition; there ain't nothin' in it. I can read as well as he every bit; but people hadn't ought to get their bread by readin' the Bible and doin' of nothin': it ain't respectable. I gives the people music: if they don't think it worth nothin', they gives me nothin' for it; if they do, they gives me a copper, and very glad to git it. There's some blind men as keeps standins in the street, and sells sticks, and braces, and padlocks, and key-rings; some on 'em drives a good trade. I knows one as got a family brought up quite respectable—the boys is 'prentices, and the gals goes to service. I should like to keep a standin' myself if I had a few poun's to begin with; but then, I never had but one sovereign in my hand in my

life, and that wasn't mine. There's lots o' blind men goes about wi' dogs tied to a string: them's beggars. When a blind man drives a dog, he've a made up his mind to be a gentleman. A dog ain't of no real use to a blind man in London—not a bit in the world. A dog is a blind beggar's sign; and when the dog carries a tray in his mouth to catch the coppers, then there's two beggars instead o' one. There's a sight o' blind men in London as can see as well as you can. They starts out when 'tis dark wi' great patches over their eyes, and goes with a boy—a young thief—to lead 'em, among the crowds and in the markets of a Saturday night. When they gets into the thick of it they sings out: "Good Christians! for the love of Heaven bestow your charity upon the poor blind—and God preserve your precious eyesight." That's their chant. They gits a lot o' money from the people, partik'lar on Saturday nights, when the small change is flyin' about: them's robbers, an' nothin' else. There's some poor fellows as I knows as can't do nothin' for a livin'. Blind men is often weak in the head—a bit silly-like. They mostly lives in workhouses; sometimes they tries it on wi' lucifer-matches: they likes to get out in the sun in summer-time and fine weather: I pities them, poor fellows! 'tis hard luck they've got.

'I'm always cheerful-minded 'cept when I'm very hungry and got nothin' to take home to my wife. We don't want much—'tis very little as keeps her; but I don't like to go home without nothin' in my pocket: then I sometimes thinks 'tis too bad, and gets low-spirited; but I soon goes to sleep and forgits it, cos I'm so tired when I goes home. My wife earns somethin' most weeks; sometimes she looks arter little children when their mothers goes out a-charin'. She haves three-halfpence a day for a child: when we got two babies for a week that

makes eighteenpence, and pays the rent. A good thing that would be if we could do it always. She 's very fond o' little babies, and knows how to do for 'em as well as a mother a'most, though she never had none of her own.

'Saturday's my best day. My customers knows I can't play the fiddle of a Sunday, and so I gits a good allowance of vittles, and fills my bag. There' s a butcher not far off as gives me a reg'lar good stew o' bones an' cuttin's every Saturday night. That 's my Sunday's dinner, and a famous dinner my wife makes on it. There 's a policeman out here as collars me reg'lar whenever my bag 's a bit full, and turns it all out, and axes me where I stole it. I says: "I 'll answer that there question at the station-house, if you likes to take me there;" but he never takes me up. That 's a noosance, that is.

'I never buys no clothes; I git as much as I want gave me. The boots is the worst. In course I never gits them till they 're worn out; and as I can't afford to have 'em mended, when it rains my feet is always in the wet; but I 'm pretty well used to it—that 's one good thing. This time o' the year 'tis very bad: there is so much bad weather, and so few people about, a blind fiddler might as well stay at home. There 's been nothin' but rain all the week. I only earned twopence yesterday, and that just made up the rent as was overdue: there was nothin' for supper, though I 'd had nothin' all day but a bit o' bread in the mornin', and to-day there was none for me to have, so I come away without any. My wife have had her vittles to-day, that 's one comfort: she went out afore I did to go a-washin'; she 'll earn sixpence besides her vittles—and we shall have a good supper to-night, thank God!

I 've had a good many accidents in my time. There is so many omnibuses now, that a blind man can't venture

off the pavement. It takes me half an hour sometimes to get across from the *Angel* into the City Road. I've been knocked down by cabs and omnibuses six or seven times; I never got much hurt myself, but my fiddle have been broke all to pieces several times. I always mend it myself, but it's a deal o' trouble and loss of time while the glue's a-dryin'. Drunken men is worse than omnibuses. I've been beat about by drunken men many's the time, cos I couldn't play the tunes they wanted. I never goes into a public-house now: I had so many tricks put upon me, that I finds it better to keep away. I was a'most killed once by a lot o' Irishmen: they knocked me about dreadful, and filled my fiddle full o' beer, and then made me play upon it, and cut the strings while I was a-playin'. They done that cos I'm a very little fellow, and got no strength. That's too bad! Sometimes gentlefolks is none too civil. Just afore I come to your gate, I tried at a house a little way down the road: a gentleman come a-rushin' out, catches me by the throat, and twistis me roun' and roun', and shoves me over the steps, a-swearin' as how he'd got two scrapers at his door a'ready, and didn't want another. That ain't civil, seein' I fiddles as well as I can, and he got no call to pay for it if he ha'nt a mind to.

'I don't know as I can tell you anythin' more, sir. You see I don't know much of the world. All days is pretty much alike to me: wet or dry, hot or cold, is all the difference between one day and another. We does the best we can. When the sun shines, and people walks about and enjoys theirselves, I gits a little money, and my wife and I is cheerful and contented. When the bad wintry weather comes down upon us, we do feel what it is to be hungry and poor; but we can't help it, and it ain't no use frettin'. We might git into the workhouse in the

winter if we liked, but then we must sell up all our sticks, and I should lose all my customers where I plays reg'lar, and have to begin the world agin when we come out in the summer. It wouldn't, do, that wouldn't.

'My wife 's a merry little ooman, and can go without a dinner and never grumble: many 's the day she gits no vittles, no more than myself. When there ain't no vittles in the cupboard, and no means of earnin' any, I tells her not to git up, and so she lies abed all day, cos 'tis easier fastin' in bed than when you are up and about. If I brings home anythin', then she gits up and cooks it, and then we 're all right. We always hopes for better times, and if we don't live to see 'em, why then we shan't grieve for the want of 'em. I plays the song, *There's a good time comin'*, *boys*, and my wife sings it. There 's no harm in hopin' that we may all live to see it. That 's all I 've got to say, sir.'

With that this uncomplaining heir of adverse fortune rose from his seat, placed his fiddle under his arm, and thanking me warmly for all favours, groped his way up the kitchen stairs and took his departure. I have given his history as he detailed it: it has had no colouring and requires no comment at my hands. It is just one of those revelations of the mysteries of common life which are only remarkable because the world in general has not chosen to make them object of remark. But verily it has a use and a signification which discontented respectability, cushioned in its easy-chair, may do well to ponder.

# TRUTH AND HONESTY.

A REVOLUTION of opinions is taking place in the present day; sectarian and national prejudices give way to a holy feeling of universal brotherhood; military conquests are robbed of their tinsel, and appear in their native deformity; and moral dignity, though discovered amid poverty and ignorance, is raised to its legitimate place, exciting the respect and admiration of all capable of estimating true worth. This latter remark will plead an apology for introducing to the reader a young hero, filling a station no higher than that of a pupil in a parochial school.

Two boys, of nearly the same age, were one day amusing themselves with that dangerous, though not uncommon pastime, pelting each other with stones. They had chosen one of the squares for their play-ground, thinking by this means to avoid doing mischief. To the consternation of the thrower, however, a missile, instead of resting on the shoulders of the boy at whom it was aimed, entered the library window of one of the lordly mansions forming the quadrangle.

'Why don't you take to your heels, you blockhead?

you will have the police after you whilst you are standing staring there,' was the exclamation of his companion, as he caught him by the arm in order to drag him from the spot. The author of the mischief still retained his thoughtful position.

'If your father is obliged to pay for this, you will stand a chance of having a good thrashing, Jack,' the other boy urged.

'Never mind, Tom; leave me to myself,' was the reply; and the young delinquent moved, with unfaltering step, towards the door of the mansion, the knocker of which he unhesitatingly raised. The summons was answered by a footman.

'Is the master of the house at home?' he with some diffidence inquired.

'He is.'

'Then I wish to see him, if you please.'

'That you can't do, my man; but I'll deliver any message for you.'

'No, that will not do. I must—indeed I must see the gentleman himself.' The earnestness and perseverance of the boy at length induced the man to comply with his request, and opening the door of the library, he apologised for asking his master to see a shabby little fellow; adding, that he could neither learn his business nor get rid of him.

'Bring him in,' said the gentleman addressed, who, having witnessed the transaction, and overheard the conversation, was curious to know the object of the boy's visit. The poor child, whose ideas had never soared above his father's second floor, stood for several moments in stupefied amazement when ushered into an elegant apartment; remembering the painful circumstance which had brought him into the scene of enchantment, he in some measure regained his self-possession.

'I am very sorry, sir,' he began in a faltering voice, 'but I have broken your window. My father is out of work just now, and cannot pay for it; but if you will be kind enough to take the money a little at a time, as I can get it, I will be sure to make it up;' and as he spoke, he drew a few halfpence from his pocket and laid them on the table.

'That's an honest speech, my lad; but how am I to be sure that you will fulfil your engagement?' Mr Cavendish returned. 'Do you know that I could have you sent to the station-house till the money is made up?'

'Oh, don't send me there, sir; it would break my dear mother's heart! I will pay you all—indeed I will, sir;' and the poor boy burst into a flood of tears.

'I am glad that you have so much consideration for your mother's feelings, and for *her* sake I will trust to your honesty.'

'Oh, thank you, sir—thank you!'

'But when do you expect to be able to make me another payment? This is a very small sum towards the price of a large square of plate-glass;' and as he spoke, he glanced at the four halfpence which the boy had spread out.

'This day week, sir, if you please.'

'Very well, let it be so. At this hour I shall be at home to see you.' Poor Jack made his very best bow, and retired.

True to his appointment, our high-principled boy appeared at the door of Mr Cavendish's mansion. As the footman had previously received orders to admit him, he was immediately shewn into the library.

'I have a shilling for you to-day, sir!' he said exultingly, and his countenance was radiant with smiles.

'Indeed! That is a large sum for a boy like you to

obtain in so short a time. I hope you came by it honestly?' A flush of crimson mounted to the cheek of poor Jack, but it was not a flush of shame.

'I earned every penny of it, sir, excepting one my mother gave me, to make it up,' he energetically replied; and he proceeded to say that he had been on the look-out for jobs all week; that he had held a horse for one gentleman, and had run on an errand for another; in this way accounting for elevenpence.

'Your industry and perseverance do you credit, my lad,' Mr Cavendish exclaimed, his benevolent countenance lighting up with a smile. 'And now I should like to know your name and place of residence.'

'I will write it, sir, if you please. Indeed I brought a piece of paper for the purpose of putting down the money. I hope I shall be able to make it all up in a few weeks, for I am trying to get a situation as errand-boy.

'You can write then? Do you go to school?'

'Oh yes, sir. I go to a free school.' And Jack stepped forward to take the pen, which Mr Cavendish held towards him.

'You write a tolerably good hand, my little man. You may, I think, do better than take an errand-boy's place. Let me see if you have any knowledge of arithmetic.' Jack stood boldly up, and unhesitatingly replied to the various questions which were put to him. 'That will do, my good boy. Now, when do you think you will be able to come and bring me some more money?'

'I will come again this time next week, if I'm alive and well, sir.'

'That was wisely added, my lad; for our lives are not in our own keeping. This, I see, you have been taught.'

Another week passed, and again Jack appeared, but his countenance now wore an aspect of sadness.

'I am very sorry, sir,' he said, 'I have been unfortunate, and have only a small sum to give you.' And as he spoke, he laid three pennyworth of halfpence before Mr Cavendish. 'I assure you, sir,' he earnestly added, 'I have offered my services to every gentleman on horseback that I could see.'

'I believe you, my boy: I am pleased with your honest intentions. Perhaps you will meet with better success another time. Let me see; you have now paid one shilling and fivepence: that is not amiss for the time;' and with an encouraging smile Mr Cavendish suffered him to depart.

Though Mr Cavendish had, from the first, concealed his intentions, his heart was planning a work of benevolence, which was nothing less than to befriend the poor boy, whose noble conduct had won his admiration. For this end he, a few days subsequently, paid the parents a visit when he knew that the son would be at school. He related the incident which had brought him under his notice, and proceeded to ask whether his conduct towards themselves was equally praiseworthy.

'Oh yes, sir,' exclaimed the mother, her eyes filling with tears. 'He has ever been a dutiful child to us, and always acts in this honest, straightforward manner.'

'He has indeed a noble spirit, sir,' the father rejoined; 'and I am as proud of him as if he were a prince.'

'Would you part with him?' Mr Cavendish asked. 'I have something in view for his future benefit.'

'Undoubtedly we would, for his benefit,' was the reply of both.

'Well, then, purchase him a new suit of apparel with these two guineas, and bring him to my residence this

day week. I will then acquaint you with my views for him in the future.

Language cannot describe the heartfelt gratitude which beamed in the eyes of the happy parents, nor could they find words to give it utterance.

When next our young hero came into the presence of his benefactor, his appearance was certainly altered for the better, though no disadvantages of dress could rob his noble countenance of its lofty expression. Mr Cavendish had previously made arrangements for him to become an inmate of his own house, and had also entered his name as a pupil in a neighbouring school. John Williams was soon receiving a liberal education, and enjoying all the advantages which wealth could procure. Such a sudden change of position and prospects would, in many instances, prove injurious to the moral character; but with a mind based upon the solid principles which our young friend possessed, there was no danger of such a result in his case.

# JAQUES CALLOT.

THE ancient town of Nancy slumbers peacefully amid the pretty landscape which surrounds it, scarcely recalling to the traveller the glories of its earlier days ; but the villages embosomed in trees, the vineyards varied by cherry orchards, the bright green of the meadows, the sombre depth of the forests, the sparkling river, and the clear, ever-changing sky—all at once remind us that Nancy was the birthplace of Claude Lorraine ; that from these forests, these hamlets, these flowery fields and sparkling waters, he drew inspiration for those pictures which charm alike the accomplished artist and the simple child. Remembering this, and that the efforts of genius, both in painting and in poetry, generally take their colour from first impressions, we might wonder how so peaceful and gentle a landscape can have been the cradle of Jaques Callot ; and we ask where he found the originals of the soldiers, conjurers, and gipsies, which form the subjects of his pencil. The history of his early life will enlighten us.

In the town of Nancy, near the old Hôtel de Marque, let us picture to ourselves an old house with a high roof, its door and windows ornamented with weather-beaten

carvings. Below is a stone bench, used by travellers and beggars; on the first floor are two windows, encased in stone; and in the roof, above the gutter, are two others, surrounded by moss, tufts of grass, and here and there a flower, planted by the wind or the birds; above all rises a tall chimney, with its never-ceasing smoke-wreath. At the lower windows may occasionally be seen a gentle and anxious woman, or a grave and worthy man, the parents of Callot—Jean Callot and Renée Brunehault; at the upper windows might be seen a young and happy family, among whom we recognise Jaques by his inquisitive and fearless look, always seeking subjects for his pencil.

The interior of this house corresponds with its exterior. There are chairs sculptured in oak; Gothic tables, with twisted legs; a devotional chair; an ebony crucifix, on which the spider has never been suffered to hang a thread; a wide chimney, decorated with a lozenge-shaped glass, a timepiece, and silver goblets of elegant form and good workmanship; while on the shelves are vessels of pewter and stoneware—all dimly lighted by the little lozenge-shaped panes which compose the window. Our first glance shews us Jean Callot in a showy dress, walking up and down the room to aid his thoughts, and Renée sitting in the chimney-corner spinning.

In this house was born, in 1592, Jaques Callot, of a family originally Flemish, but afterwards attached to the Burgundian family. Claude, the grandfather of Jaques, was ennobled by Charles III., Duke of Lorraine, for his bravery and loyal services: he married a grand-niece of the Maid of Orleans. Jean, the father of Jaques, was herald-at-arms to the Duke of Lorraine, and Renée his wife was daughter to the physician to Christina of Denmark. She was a good, quiet woman; and having lost all her daughters, placed her warmest affection upon her

youngest son Jaques, who never forgot her tender care of him. Jean Callot, prouder of his title of principal herald-at-arms than the Duke of Lorraine was of his duchy, fixed upon his youngest son for his successor, his elder ones having already embarked in other callings; and from the age of eight years Jaques was taught by his father how to draw and paint armorial bearings. His passion for drawing was such, that at his writing-school he made a sketch of each letter of the alphabet. A was the pointed roof of his house; B the weathercock of his neighbour's; and thus with the rest. There had been painters in his mother's family, and Renée herself loved the arts, unconsciously giving the same taste to her youngest son. She could not comprehend how any one could pass a whole life in clearing away the dust from old coats of arms, as her grave and austere husband did; and whenever she was alone with Jaques, she roused his young fancy by lively tales of the adventures of men of genius. Well acquainted was this good woman with the strange histories of the old painters; and after hearing these, Jaques would go up to his own chamber, and with pen or pencil make sketches at random. When his ardour cooled, he would lean out of his attic window, and while feeding the sparrows with the bread which he had used for his drawings, he would ponder upon his mother's tales, and gaze upon the streets, or into his neighbours' windows. From his window he saw before him a beautiful landscape, hemmed in by mountains and forests, variegated by groves and villages, and cultivated fields, among which the Meurthe meandered. But Jaques cared little for the beauties of scenery: man had far greater attraction for him; and he studied all that he saw of singular, extravagant, or original in his fellow-creatures. He delighted in bullying soldiers; street

singers, with mouths wider than the wooden bowls out of which they ate; quack doctors, who sang and danced; beggars in picturesque rags; pilgrims with their doublets slashed with the rents of time, and carrying about box-wood rosaries, artificial flowers, leaden medallions—all the devotional gewgaws of the saints. In 1600 there were no theatres in the provinces; thus it was a rich age for dancing-bears, fortune-tellers, and tumblers on fête-days. Jaques early attempted to sketch all these grotesque figures, either from his own window or in the open street; and he has been seen sitting carelessly on the pavement quietly drawing in his school-book some conjurer who struck his fancy. Once his father found him seated upon the edge of a fountain in Nancy, his naked feet in the water, earnestly sketching the great nose and wide mouth of a clown who was grinning at some distance.

Even when these sights were wanting, Jaques knew how to amuse himself with his pencil in sketching his schoolmaster, sometimes grave to absurdity, sometimes inflamed by the worship of Bacchus; and when tired of reading, he would play the truant, rush into the first open church, and pass hours there contemplating the sculptured altars and monuments, the frescoes, the Gothic windows, the religious paintings of the old artists. He made his way wherever anything curious was to be seen—into churches, monasteries, hotels, even into the ducal palace; and, thanks to his handsome face, half hidden by fair curls, thanks to the fine Flemish lace with which his mother ornamented his throat and wrists, no one stopped him.

One Sunday morning Jaques was attracted to his window by the sounds of the fife and drum of a band of gipsies, who were setting up their tents before the Hôtel de Marque. The beams of a spring sun fell brightly

upon the group, and Jaques, enchanted, crept down to the gutter to watch them; he next mounted to the chimney, and there, with his eye fixed, his mouth half open, but silent, his ear listening, he beheld the curtain raised, and preparations made for the play: he saw the decorations taken out of a little cart drawn by an ass, which ass and cart were themselves among the actors. Spangled dresses, faded long ago, shone in the sun; while three infants were deposited among lions and serpents of pasteboard, which served them as playthings. In the space of a quarter of an hour Jaques saw so many things, natural and unnatural, come forth from the cart, that he imagined the chief of the party must have the power of creation. Hastening down to the spot, he stood aside for a little while; but as his astonishment increased, he approached close to the curtain, and to obtain pardon for his boldness, he offered the first gipsy who passed near him a wild sunflower which he had gathered on the house roof.

'Here, I declare,' said the gipsy, smelling the flower, 'is a handsome child! Do not blush, boy. Did your mother sew on this rich lace? She may well kiss your fine curls. Come, do not be afraid: I am not the red woman.'

Saying this, the gipsy embraced Jaques tenderly, adding: 'This face foretells us a lucky day, so I shall tell the pretty child his fortune. Come, look at me with those blue eyes; they will recommend you to the ladies, and you will make your way, my child.'

'My way! my way!' murmured Jaques sighing. Then he asked: 'Have you people ever been in Italy?'

'Many times. Do you wish to travel? Yes indeed; I read it in your countenance. You shall travel so much, and to so good purpose, that when you die, your bones

shall be shrouded in your cradle. If that proud lip is to be believed, you will be a valiant soldier.'

'Never!' cried Jaques.

'What, then, could you better like to be?'

'A painter.'

'A painter! That is a low trade: do not try it if you wish always to wear such lace as this. I know more than one who is obliged to live upon chance. Nevertheless, if it amuses you, forward! But it is not your destiny.'

'When do you set off for Italy?' asked Jaques.

'In November; for in winter the sun of Naples is warm enough for us.'

'Since you know everything,' said Jaques, hesitating, 'tell me at what age I shall die?'

The gipsy took his little hand. By a chance with which his after-fate agreed, the line of life was broken in the middle; and the gipsy turned away her head sorrowfully. 'The line is not yet formed; at our next meeting, I will tell you how long you will live.'

'If I live to be forty years old, like my Uncle Brunehault, I shall be content.'

At this moment Jaques saw his father coming from the ducal palace, and he hastened into the house.

'A good journey, and good luck!' cried the gipsy to him, touching her lips with the sunflower.

Jaques hoped his father had not seen him; but the first thing the latter did on entering the house was to call his son and wring his ears, crying out: 'Go along: you are only a mountebank, unworthy of bearing either my name or my shield; above all, unworthy of my dignity of herald. I had reckoned upon you; but do you think the grand-duke will confide his great genealogical book to you after my death? Instead of learning

the old histories of the nobility of our land, in order to do justice to each according to his arms and his deeds, you should make sketches of jugglers : the greatest prince to you should be the best rope-dancer. Go ; I despair of you, disobedient child ! With your vagabond habits, you will end your days at the galleys.'

Thus speaking, the venerable Jean Callot walked with a dignified air into his closet ; Jaques went to hide his tears on the bosom of his mother, who also wept while rebuking her son.

'You are going to be more prudent, my dear child ; these are repentant tears ; from this day you will study earnestly the noble science of heraldry. Go—go, the bell is ringing for church.'

When Jaques had dressed himself, he thought with a smile of hope : 'This costume will do well for my journey to Italy.' Till this moment he had not thought of Italy but with trembling ; he now gave himself up to the dream with more confidence ; and at church his imagination wandered to the mountains of Switzerland and the Tyrol. The music, the sun streaming through the Gothic windows upon the altar, the incense raised his fancy to the utmost, and a strange voice seemed to cry out to him : 'Italy ! Italy !' All the splendours of the Eternal City arose bewitchingly before his eyes ; the Madonnas of Raphael smiled and extended their angelic arms to him. Even if the dangers of such a pilgrimage crossed his mind, his courage returned again instantly. 'Am I not almost twelve years old ?' said he, drawing himself up. When mass was ended, he remained behind in the church, to beseech God to bless his journey, and to console his mother ; after which he arose, wiped away his tears, and without looking behind him, took the road to Luneville, believing that his slender purse would carry him to the

end of the world. We must not mistake ; the love of art was doubtless the motive for this journey ; but was not the journey itself something towards the bold determination of this capricious and independent spirit?

We have not the whole history of Jaques Callot's journey : we only know that he went straight on, resting at a farm or public-house, like a young pilgrim, after having eaten of what fruit he could find, refreshing himself by the lonely fountain, and praying before each crucifix that he passed. Although accustomed to a certain degree of luxury, to a good bed, a delicate table, and, above all, to a mother's care, he slept soundly upon the truckle-bed at a public-house, upon clean straw at a farm, and often in bad company ; he ate, without grumbling, porridge and vegetables from the earthen plates of the peasants ; and even in his worst days, never regretted the paternal roof, so severe and unkind did the worthy herald-at-arms appear to him. While pursuing a glorious aim, Jaques did not forget the pleasures of his age, wild liberty, and a thirst for adventure. If he saw an ass feeding, he jumped gaily upon its back, and without caring what became of it, gave it liberty again after riding two or three leagues ; if he saw a boat upon a river, he untied it, jumped in, and rowed away till he was breathless. When taken in the act, his pleasing appearance soon gained him pardon. In this manner he reached a village near Lucerne. Although he had been very sparing, his purse was nearly empty ; in two days it would be quite so ; but he thought he could live upon fruit, and as it was hay-season, every stroke of the scythe would provide him with a bed. He had resigned himself to a prospect more poetical than agreeable, when he heard some bawling music, which reminded him of his friends the mountebanks : it may be guessed that he went towards it. It

was evening; the roofs of the hamlet were gilded by the setting sun; the cows, returning to their sheds, answered the shrill fife by their lowings, the bulls by the tinkling of their little bells, and the herdsman by his stunning horn. Jaques presently reached the church, near which a band of gipsies were performing an uncouth dance, to the great wonderment of a noisy circle of villagers; and Jaques seated himself on the churchyard wall, that he might enjoy the scene at his ease. He beheld twenty gipsies of all ages, from the grandmother to the cradled infant, dressed in rags covered with spangles; some of them dancing, others playing on the viol or fife, some telling fortunes, and some carrying round their wooden cups among the spectators. The sun shone brightly on their wretched attire, giving it an appearance of magnificence befitting fairy gambols. Among the dancers, two young girls of fifteen or sixteen attracted general attention by their beauty and grace; and Jaques, whose eyes followed all their movements, could not resist drawing their portraits. Taking out the paper and pencils which he always kept about him, he had succeeded pretty well in grouping together the two handsome dancers, when he was surprised to find himself surrounded by several peasants, who were regarding with silent wonder his strange occupation. Without troubling himself at this, he continued his work till the dancers, understanding that he was drawing them, wished in their turn to see whether he had done them justice; and Jaques, beholding his charming models each leaning over a shoulder with her face close to his, let his pencil fall from his hand.

'How pretty he is, sister!' said one of them.

'How clever he is!' replied the other.

'Whence did he come? Who is he? Where is he going?'

'I am going to Rome,' said Jaques, not knowing well what he ought to say.

'To Rome! To Italy! We are going to Florence. What a lucky companion, if he would go with us! All roads lead to Rome!'

'Yes, a lucky companion!' said Jaques, drawing out his purse. 'Here is all I have for my journey, and I have eaten scarcely anything to-day.'

'Poor child! I shall take him to the Red Inn, where we are to have some beans and milk for supper, and oat-straw in the barn to sleep on. Come, the sun has set, and our cups are full. Kiss my pearl necklace, and give me your hand.'

Saying this, she bent her throat towards the unwilling lips of Jaques, who, however, kissed the necklace; and each of the sisters taking a hand, they led him towards the troop who were just going away. They soon reached the Red Inn, and before supper, Jaques was formally admitted into the band; and for what little money he had, was promised escort to Florence, on strict condition that he should take portraits of the whole party, beasts included. The scent of the beans made him promise everything required. The supper was joyous and noisy; it was washed down with several cups of common wine, and finished with a roundelay which Callot remembered to the day of his death.

On the following day they passed through Lucerne, where they made but a poor harvest; and then they fixed their tents in a neighbouring forest, where they lived for a week upon what they could steal, resting themselves and their beasts, mending and washing their clothes, polishing their spangles, coining false money, working at small articles of jewellery, necklaces, copper and leaden rings, buckles, and other ornaments used by the peasants.

They lived well upon game, which the older women cooked, while Jaques went with the girls to find birds' feathers to make finery of, and bunches of service-tree for necklaces; he also gathered wild cherries, strawberries, and gooseberries for the general dessert. He likewise cut figures upon the bark of the trees. The two young girls took good care of Jaques, and even hid from his view the scandalous scenes which were passing around him.

When they resumed their journey, they did so by easy stages, begging in villages, stealing from lonely huts, leaving everywhere their evil traces. They crossed the Alps by the wildest paths, living by the convents. At length, after six months of strange and perilous adventures, Jaques Callot hailed the soil of Italy, the holy land of art. It was time, for among these wild people the poor child was in great danger of being ruined. 'Italy! Italy!' he cried, throwing up his hands, while he thanked God with tears. From this moment he seemed to breathe a purer air. 'Adieu, Pepa! adieu, Miji! you are both beautiful, but Italy is more beautiful.'

Such is Callot's early history. Some years later, he immortalised his friends the gipsies in his works of 'Gipsies Travelling,' and 'the Halt of Gipsies.'

The troop went to Florence, not allowing their guest time to satisfy his curiosity at Milan, Parma, and Bologna; but his hasty glance at palaces, obelisks, fountains, and statues, dazzled and enchanted him more and more. He was in a state of mental intoxication, which made him forget the presence of his companions even when they made an exhibition.

At Florence, a Piedmontese gentleman, in the service of the grand-duke, met Callot among the gipsies, and was at once struck with the delicate features and genteel movements of the child, whom he could not imagine to

belong to the people in whose company he found him. The manner in which Callot was gazing enraptured upon the sculpture of a fountain, taking no part in the grotesque dance and begging manœuvres of the troop, convinced the gentleman; and calling Jaques to him, he questioned him kindly. Finding that the boy did not understand Italian, he spoke to him in French, and soon learned the little history of his leaving Nancy, his meeting with his companions, and his intention of studying the great masters at Rome, that he might, if it pleased God, become a great master also. This high resolve in a child of twelve or thirteen interested the gentleman greatly; and taking Callot by the hand, he led him at once to an engraver and painter with whom he was acquainted—Gauta Gallina—saying: 'Treat this child as if he were mine; make him worthy of me and yourself.'

Callot was received at once, but at the end of six weeks, he told his protector that he wished to go to Rome, to study where Raphael had studied. The gentleman feared that he had befriended a vagabond rather than a young artist; however, as he loved Jaques, he did not desert him. He bought him a mule and some clothes, gave him excellent advice, with a promise to visit him at Rome, and parted with him affectionately, and with tears. Jaques, proudly seated on the mule, also shed tears; but once set off, the brilliant future occupied all his thoughts. At Sienna, he stopped to visit the church, and learned a lesson in engraving from the splendid mosaic of the pavement under the dome, the work of Duccio. He thought if he was ever an engraver, he would give effect by the breadth of single lines, without using hatching. Arrived at the gates of Rome, he left his mule to take its course, and the beast trotted along after an ass laden with vegetables, of which he now and then took a mouthful,

unobserved by Jaques, whose bewildered eye wandered over the Eternal City, now clothed by the setting sun with a golden garment. At length he had gained his desire; but, as it often happens, that very moment he was foiled. Some merchants of Nancy, on their return to their city, met Jaques Callot perched on his mule. 'Oh, ho! Master Jaques Callot, where are you going in this style?' The young traveller saw his danger, and spurred his mule; but escape was impossible with an Italian mule which was feeding so agreeably; and the merchants seized the fugitive. As these good folks had witnessed the grief of the Callot family, they declared their resolution to reconduct him safely to his paternal roof; and notwithstanding his tears, his prayers, and his anger, Jaques was obliged to submit. He bade adieu to Rome without having set his foot in her streets.

In vain did Callot repeatedly attempt to escape from the travelling merchants; they never let him go out of their sight, keeping him on his mule in the middle of the party; and he arrived at Nancy after a month of tedious travelling, in which he heartily regretted his gipsy friends. His father received him with a lecture upon truanting, and a discourse upon heraldic science, which made Callot secretly determine to be off again; the tears of his mother alone restrained him for a short time.

However, he soon went off, with a purse light enough, and skirting the Lake of Geneva, entered Italy by Savoy; but at Turin he was again stopped by his brother the lawyer, who happened to be there, and who forced him back to Nancy a second time.

His third departure was more prosperous, for his father, with tears, gave his consent to it, and Jaques set off in the train of the ambassador from Lorraine to the Pope, to acquaint the latter with the accession of

Henry II. Callot was now fifteen, and had still time enough before him to study at Rome. His enthusiasm at the wonders of the ancient city cannot be described; he worked under several masters, but followed his own genius only, and he soon felt that painting was not his forte. He entered warmly into engraving, and placed himself under Thomassin, an old French engraver residing at Rome. This art was then in its infancy, and Thomassin had made his fortune by it. His subjects were principally religious ones, of which Callot was soon weary. Young as he was, he discovered at each attempt some new resource; and he soon gave way to his fancy, recalling to his mind the beggars, strolling players, mountebanks, and other human curiosities whom he had seen. Under Thomassin he used the graver; but this process was too slow for his imagination, and he soon left it for that of etching.

One day when the pencil had fallen from his hand, as he was sadly thinking of those charming young gipsies who had loved him as their child, the figure of the Lady Bianca, Thomassin's young and handsome wife, rose before him. She often visited Callot when he was at work, and unconsciously he made her his study. Thomassin encouraged this, requesting Callot to be his wife's companion to church and to the public promenade when he could not accompany her; but at length, taking alarm at the result to which this might lead in a young and imaginative man, he desired him to leave the house. Callot did so, taking with him only his works, and bade adieu to Rome, leaving behind him his dreams. He never saw Madame Thomassin again—he never revisited Rome. After this, the history of Callot loses its adventurous and exciting character, offering little more than undisturbed days and a laborious end.

Jaques Callot went to Florence, undecided whether to remain there ; but he hoped to establish himself with his first master. He was almost penniless, and what was worse, his courage had left him. At the city gate he was stopped as a stranger, and, careless of his fate, he fell into a passion, and resisted, demanding to be conducted to the ducal palace without delay. On telling his griefs and his pretensions to Cosmo II., who patronised art of all kinds, the grand-duke congratulated himself on what had occurred, and told Callot that he should remain at his palace, where he had a grand school of painting, engraving, and sculpture. Callot was delighted at the accident, and set to work in the palace with even more ardour than when with Thomassin. Besides his former master, he met there a painter and engraver who was of great service to him, Alphonso Parigi, who prepared the scenery for the duke's theatre. Callot passed some time at this work, and also painted some subjects in the Flemish style, of which one remains in the Florentine Gallery. It is the half-length of a Spanish soldier, and has the same bold yet delicate touch—the same grace of composition as his engravings.

Callot remained ten years at Florence, enjoying the same patronage under Ferdinand that he had done under Cosmo II., and receiving the gold medal which was bestowed upon native talent. During these ten years he produced his best works, creating a new world under his touch, and seeing all through the prism of his fancy. His art became his sole passion, enchaining him more and more without relaxation, till it conducted him to the grave, young in years, but bowed, faded, exhausted like a noble horse, which has run too long a race. He had no longer eyes except for his work ; if he went out of his studio, it was but to seek for subjects

for his etching needle—a beggar, a soldier, or some other extraordinary actor on the scene of human life. He never allowed himself time to admire the grandeur or beauty of creation; neither the sun nor the stars, neither the flowers nor the streams: heart and mind were dead, as it were, and the sheet of copper was his only joy.

He returned to Nancy. One evening the aged herald-at-arms, leaning at his window, seeing a carriage stop at the door of his house, asked his wife if it belonged to the court. The good woman Renée, whose heart and eyes saw more clearly, cried, almost fainting upon the window-sill: 'It is Jaques!—it is thy son!' The aged herald went down instantly, asking himself whether it could be possible that his son, the engraver of silly pictures, was come back in a carriage? After a hearty but grave embrace, he hastened to see whether the Callot arms were painted on the coach. Putting on his spectacles, he discovered with pride and joy the shield of his son—five stars crosswise: 'the cross of labour,' it is said; 'for the stars indicate the nightly labour of Callot, and his hopes of fame.'

Fatigued with his wanderings, Callot resolved to end his days at Nancy, so he bought a house and married. We know nothing of his wife Catherine Kuttinger, except that she was a widow, and had a daughter. It was certainly a marriage of prudence. Callot became religious, going to church every morning, and passing an hour every evening in prayer. He resumed his work; but adieu to wild inspirations, to satire and gaiety; he only undertook grave and religious subjects. At Paris his fame was known, and Louis XIII. desired him to follow in his suite to the siege of Rochelle, as he alone was worthy to immortalise his victories. Callot obeyed

reluctantly, and after the siege, returned to Paris to finish his sketches. He was lodged at the Luxembourg, where he found his friend Sylvaster Israel, and where he assisted with Rubens, Poussin, and other great painters in decorating the palace. But in spite of these illustrious friendships—the protection of Louis XIII., and the thousand attractions of Paris—Callot returned to Nancy as soon as he had leisure. He loved quiet, and he left the care of editing his works to his friend Israel. Besides, Callot loved his family, his native city, and his country, whose history he studied in his leisure hours. He had been born when Lorraine was independent, and had lived in the reigns of Charles III. and Henry II., when the nobility were illustrious by their deeds, the burghers industrious and intelligent, the people happy under a light yoke, when art was worthily represented in each of its departments, when religion stood firm upon ancestral faith, when industry produced its manufactures, and the workman blessed the peace he enjoyed. But Jaques Callot also witnessed the fall of his country when, under the rule of Charles IV., she lost everything but honour.

Instigated by the enmity of Cardinal Richelieu to Gaston of Orleans, who had married the sister of Charles IV., Louis XIII. went to besiege Nancy, which he expected would fall as easily as Rochelle had done. But the weather was bad, Louis lost courage, and the siege was about to be raised, when the cardinal bethought himself of a stratagem. The Duke of Lorraine was drawn into the French camp, in the hope of signing articles of peace, and held prisoner, while the king, at the cardinal's instigation, obliged him to sign an order to the governor of Nancy to open its gates. The Princess of Phalsbourg in vain urged the governor not

to obey the order of a captive sovereign ; the gates were opened, and the enemy admitted. Callot seeing that all was lost, shut himself up in his chamber to conceal his anger, and when the thoughtless artists of the place went to pay their court to Louis XIII., the latter was surprised at not seeing Callot among them.

'Has he forgotten my benefits, then?' said the king to Claude de Ruet; and the painter repeated to Callot what the king had said.

'Yes,' replied the brave artist indignantly; 'yes, I have forgotten his benefits since he entered the open gates of Nancy fully armed.'

Claude de Ruet urged his friend to accompany him to the ducal palace, where the king was holding his court.

'Never!' said Callot; and the painter left him to his pride and grief. But presently an order came signed by the Duke Charles: 'Jaques Callot is summoned to the palace to the king's presence.'

'Well, then, I shall go; but without bending my head to him.'

The king received him very graciously, and said: 'Master Callot, we have not forgotten that you placed your talent at the service of our glory. You have drawn for the benefit of future times the taking of the Isle of Rhé and the siege of Rochelle; now you must draw the siege of Nancy.'

Callot feeling the insult, drew up his head proudly, saying: 'Sir, I am a Lorrainer: I would cut off my finger sooner!'

When he had said it, Jaques expected to pay dearly for his audacious reply. All present cried out, swords were drawn, and at a sign made, soldiers with halberds appeared at the door. On the other side, the nobility

of Lorraine, faithful to their country, formed a circle round Callot, resolved to defend him, when Louis XIII., who had sometimes the soul of a king and a man, to the great surprise of all the court and of the artist himself, said to Callot: 'Callot, your reply does you honour;' and turning to his courtiers, added: 'The Duke of Lorraine is very happy in having such subjects.'

In this year Jaques felt the beginning of the disease which slowly carried him to the grave. Laying aside his work, he passed the summer at Villers, where his father had an estate. He was amused by the playfulness of his wife's daughter; but his illness increased, and his disordered imagination continually dwelt upon Satan and the infernal regions. When the grave was open for him, he executed his great work, 'The Temptation of St Anthony;' a work worthy of the poet who inspired it—Dante. His physicians desired him to relinquish his labour, to live idly in the open air of the country; but he would not obey them; and having finished the above work under a depression of mind for which no outward cause is assigned, he again seized his graving tool, and in a dream of his youthful days, with all the fire of his best efforts, accomplished the plate known as 'The Little Vine Arbour'—a representation of peasants dancing and drinking.

Callot died March 25, 1635, and was buried in the cloister of the Cordeliers. A handsome monument was erected among those of the Dukes of Lorraine, with his portrait by his friend Michael Lasne; but in 1793 the republicans, believing this the burial-place of a noble, defaced the portrait, and destroyed the tomb. However, in 1825, the remains of Callot were replaced in the church, and a tomb built over them.

# THE NUREMBERG LIVING EGG.

ONE day an aged citizen of Nuremberg came before the mayor, and submitted to him the request, that he would allow him to be shut up in prison for a short time, in order that he might there be able entirely to devote himself to his own thoughts without being disturbed. This application astonished the mayor not a little, and with great gentleness he asked the citizen, whom he knew very well, the cause of so singular a wish.

'My wife and my sons worry me so dreadfully,' answered the citizen. 'I have a speculation of importance in my head, which I will at present discover to nobody. A wise man speaks only of deeds that are done. But my inquisitive family tease me with their questions, and their suspicions, and their reproaches, so that I have not one moment of peace. When I put them off, or if I go to work in my own little workroom, they disturb me incessantly, and worry me to death. I therefore want a few weeks of quiet, or I shall really die of anxiety and trouble of mind.' This explanation astonished the mayor still more.

'My good man,' replied he, 'the trade of your sons, which you yourself also carry on, is of itself rather a noisy one. Braziers and such-like persons are not very gentle and quiet in their occupation; but still there must be some part of your house in which nobody can have a right to disturb you.'

'But they do disturb me, nevertheless; they break my door open, rummage all my things, and displace the work I have begun. I can bear it no longer.'

'I will inquire into this,' said the mayor, after considering a short time; 'but put all thoughts of the prison out of your head. Leave that dismal dwelling to those who have deserved punishment. The place for honest people is their own homes.' The tradesman made a sad face at this speech.

'Then,' cried he, 'I shall never be able to finish what I have in my head! My life is a continual misery to me, and in the meanwhile the time is irretrievably lost. Ah! nobody knows how dear time is to me at this very moment!' The mayor now admonished him afresh, and advised him earnestly to visit the bloodletter, who would no doubt find some means of quieting him. Peter Hele shook his head, and wended his way home again.

As the mayor kept his word, and caused the wife and sons of the good citizen to be brought before him, there arose a great disturbance on their return home, for the old man did not deny the request he had made to the mayor, or what he had related to him about them. Upon this the mother and sons went boldly into court, and declared that for some time there had been no living with the father. The wife said he had become very odd in his ways; that he was always murmuring to himself about things which had no sense; that he now never spoke a reasonable word to anybody; and that upon the

slightest observation from her he got so angry as to be almost beside himself, and often threatened to beat her.

'You talk very unfeelingly,' said the mayor.

'Unfeelingly, indeed!' answered the wife. 'The domestic concerns are so heavy a weight upon me, that I am quite borne down with care, and yet I married that I might have peace, and escape trouble. You are a rich man, and do not know how hard it goes with poor artisans to earn their bread, when the master lays his hand in his lap, and sets an example of idleness.'

'So far as I can remember,' interrupted the mayor, 'Master Peter, your husband, has always been an industrious, well-conducted man.'

'Yes, your worship, so he always was, till about half a year ago.' Here tears prevented her from going on.

The mayor now turned to the eldest son, and learned from him that the father had, during the space of more than a year, given signs of a disturbed state of mind.

Upon the same questions being put to the second son, Josef, who was of as cool a temperament as his brother Peter was choleric, and who was as inert as his brother was hot and daring, he made the following statement:

'I have observed,' said he, 'that since Candlemas of this year my father has become cross and melancholy. He sleeps, and eats, and drinks very little, but does as my mother and brother have already said—he looks at the stars, and reads books that tell of the planets, and failure of crops, and famine and pestilence. I think, however, that he has been acted upon by witchcraft; for at Candlemas-time, an Italian, a native of Florence, came to see him, and remained several days in the house, and he had a great deal of conversation with my father; then he went away suddenly, and no sooner was he gone, than my father's strange conduct began. The Italians are

very often sorcerers, even if my father has not given himself up to the black art. He very often says to us: "Be silent with your teasing questions. I will say nothing to you about my secret, even if it cost me my life; but if you will be patient, I will make you rich men some day. I must, and will complete it."'

'Yes, yes; he says that often enough,' chimed in the mother and brother; 'while our affairs are going to ruin.'

'Are your children all here?' said the mayor to the wife. She answered in an indifferent tone: 'I have one more, a daughter. She is married to the tailor, Willibald; but as she has left us three years, she can know but little about her father's state.'

Upon this the mayor dismissed the wife and sons, admonishing them to treat the old man with respect and with patience, and then he ordered the tailor's wife to be called before him; when she confirmed the previous statements.

'Have you any idea what he is making?'

'No, your worship; I am only an ignorant woman. My father talks in a sort of mysterious way about what he is engaged in, but still he continually prophesies great good-luck for us all if his work succeeds. I do not know whether he is animated by a just confidence in success, or whether he is led away by some lamentable error; but I would gladly thrust my hand into the fire to free him from the persecution he undergoes at present.'

'Would you take your father home to live with you, if it were so decided?'

'I should then be obliged to do so, but it is my duty to do so without any obligation.'

'Suppose I were to make your father over to you for a few weeks, till it could be found out, by kindly and carefully observing him, what is really the state of his mind?'

'He would be heartily welcome to share the little we have, for we are but poor people, and in our little quiet house he would have leisure to compose himself. I will pray God most earnestly on my knees to preserve the dear man from melancholy and insanity.'

'Would your husband be satisfied with such an arrangement?' asked the mayor smiling. The tailor's wife smiled also, in the proud consciousness of having the upper-hand at home, and answered: 'When I promise anything, your worship, it is the same as if my husband had taken his oath of it; but I am afraid my father himself will not agree to leave his home.'

The mayor remarked to the young woman, that without doubt her father would much rather remove to her house than into a prison, and ordered this mysterious being to be brought before him again. But Peter Hele was already in the anteroom, with a little bag in his hand, and said, on entering the mayor's presence: 'See, your worship, what your exhortation has been the cause of. They have turned me out of my house—out of my own house. They have told me I may go to the workhouse or to prison; and they say that I am both foolish and wicked for having blackened their characters to the mayor, and told him that they behave to me in an unchristianlike manner. So I have brought with me what they have left me of my working-tools and materials, and give myself into your custody. But what are you doing here, my daughter?'

'She will take you to live with her till I have accommodated things for you,' said the mayor.

'You?' said the father. 'You take me into your poor little home? Do you recollect that your husband must set ten thousand stitches the more every week, in order to support such a guest as I am?'

'That is nothing to you, father; you will be with your

own affectionate children!' cried the old man's daughter with energy, and taking him by the arm. 'Come, come,' she said, 'you shall not be disturbed, nor left to starve, that I promise his honour and you.'

'But how can you,' said the mayor to Peter Hele—'how can you thus give the control of your affairs without consideration into the hands of others, and take with you instead only this rubbish?' As he said this, he pointed to the bag. The old man's tears stopped suddenly, and he answered with a half-angry look:

'Rubbish! Ah! honoured sir, this rubbish would produce a golden crop, if I could but use the present time as I wish. Time is the treasure with which I work. The hour draws near at which my time will be run out. Very well, then, my daughter, the certainty that I shall make our fortunes, makes me consent to become your guest. I shall be able to repay you for all—to make all good to you; and the certainty of this golden future is the cause of my leaving my own house with joy, and giving everything up to my covetous sons.'

As the old man now left the court, holding his daughter by the arm, and full of animated gestures and boasting promises, the mayor shook his head, and said to himself: 'How am I to find out the truth of this business? In my turn, I also begin to doubt the old man's sanity.'

A fortnight after this had scarcely expired when the head-constable appeared before the mayor, bringing Peter Hele.

'This man,' said he, 'has unmercifully beaten his son-in-law's apprentice, quite unjustly, and without any cause whatever. He seems to have done it out of pure malice, and I hope you will send him to prison for a few days to cool his temper.' There stood Master Peter again, with his little bag in his hand, and to the strict inquiry into

his conduct made by the mayor, he answered with a melancholy smile :

'See, your honour, what your accommodating of matters has done ! There is not a better-hearted man than my son-in-law ; but it is well known that no man is more inquisitive than a tailor. He has watched me, and listened at my door ; and he stole in at my window like a cat to examine my things, in order to become possessed of my secret, and now he declares that I am a sorcerer. My daughter always took part against him, and did not wish me to leave the house ; but her husband's curiosity and suspicions, and his continual ill-humour because he could not get me out of the house, were very disagreeable to me. I beat the boy, who is his master's favourite, without any provocation, but in order to put an end to the strife between the married people, and to gain peace for myself. I am sorry I was obliged to beat him ; but I could think of no other means of obtaining for a short time a quiet lodging without cost. The boy is young, too, and will have got over his blows by to-morrow.' The mayor shook his head again.

'Why, really, Peter,' said he, 'you must be out of your wits. This time you will have to enjoy the prison you have longed for so much, if you are not able to pay a fine for your offence.'

'I am a "poor fellow,"' said Peter good-humouredly, 'and beg only to be shut up by myself in some light little room, with leave to tinker and rattle as much as I please with these playthings of mine.' He pointed to the bag with his apparatus.

'It is granted you,' said the mayor. 'You will remain there for a month quite solitary. I promise you, you will be troubled by visits from nobody but the jailer.'

Master Peter went with the highest satisfaction where

others generally go with great discontent. The mayor ordered that nobody should be allowed to go near him, but that everything he wanted for his mysterious work should be got for him. The lightest rooms were allotted to him, and forbidden to every other prisoner. In the meantime, the mayor so ordered it, that the day on which the case of the wife and sons was to be finally heard should be postponed until the end of Peter's imprisonment.

When the members of the municipal council assembled to hear the complaint of Peter's family, the wife repeated her first statement word for word, and the eldest son held a long and violent discourse, which ended with the prayer that, as his father had neglected all his duties, he might be deprived of his rights in the household. 'Really,' cried the blustering young man, 'if his silly way of going on, his senseless mysteries, and his neglect of all the commands of God as the father of a family, are not enough, pray remember that he has also striven to get himself into prison, which can only be the act of a madman, and so we need say nothing further.'

Most of the councilmen nodded their heads at each other, and thought the affair was at an end, and that the crazy brazier was only fit for the madhouse, for the Christmas-holidays were near at hand, and the respectable gentlemen wished to be rid of business. The affair was just about to be put to the vote, therefore, when the mayor turned to Mrs Willibald, and asked her if she concurred: she opposed it most warmly.

'God guard your honours' consciences,' she cried, 'from such a decision. I am afraid you have the intention of making one of your best citizens dead to all temporal interests. I deny my father's insanity as fearlessly as if my salvation depended upon it. If my husband were not

a timid, superstitious man, and if he were not irritated by his brothers-in-law—who, alas! are my own brothers—the mischief would not have gone so far, and my father would not be in prison; but he would, on the contrary, be here present, supported by us, for the purpose of silencing his accusers, and making them repent of the gross ingratitude and inhumanity with which they drove him out-of-doors to starve.'

'You lie, you faithless sister!' said the young men.

'You give false witness!' screamed the mother. 'Is it our fault that he ran away from the house, because he was frightened at our mild charge against him, although he had so shamefully calumniated us, and basely forsook us to go and settle himself by the side of the ill-advised one who had helped to set him against his and her own blood?'

'Our sister thought to get all my father has, and all his pretended future riches for herself; but she is mistaken, for now let us hear what her husband has to say, cried the elder brother.

The person called, a meagre little man with a trembling voice, tried to support his brothers-in-law by telling of the foolish things done by the old man, and of his unbearable conduct, and concluded by protesting, crossing himself the while, that once when he went into his room he had there heard the devil, though he certainly had not seen him.

'Satan himself, the real Satan?' cried the councilmen, and the uproar became great.

The tailor's wife darted at him a look which frightened him; but nevertheless he went on in a trembling voice to say: 'Yes, wife, look at me—look at me as you will, it must come out, although you have forbidden me to say it. But certain and true it is, that

on the old man's table, amongst a lot of rubbish, of brass pegs and pins, and little wheels and catgut strings, there lay a wooden ball, or something of the kind, within which there was a clicking and clapping going on, as if there were an animal at work there. I shuddered as I listened to it; then suddenly it came into my head that the devil assumes all sorts of shapes, and springing away, I dashed the ball against the wall. Whether it broke or not, I don't know, for I did not look round. Once afterwards, however, when my wife had given me a good scolding for my folly, I took fresh heart, and went again into the room, but could not see it.'

The sons thought to strengthen their own statement by the nonsense the tailor had just been uttering, and a great number of the council were inclined to give credit to it; but Peter Hele's daughter, crying with vexation and distress, turned angrily to her husband:

'O you dishonourable, wicked man,' said she, 'do you want to bring the best father in the world to the rack, or to be burned? Sad is it for me and all kind-hearted people to see so much suffering heaped upon the poor man's head, without being able to say a word to help or justify him.'

'Who tells you that, young woman?' said the mayor, pulling the bell as he spoke. 'The gentlemen of this council are all too just to condemn him unheard.'

Perhaps this decided speech made the councilmen feel ashamed of appearing to wish to decide upon the case in haste, a thing which is never becoming in judges and gray heads. In the meantime, a side-door opened, and Peter Hele came forward, a wasted, exhausted figure, with an innocent, cheerful, but submissive expression of face. Still there was to be seen round his finely-cut mouth an expression of deep pain. The daughter gave a

cry of joy, but the mother, the sons, and the son-in-law looked frightened, and cast their eyes on the ground.

'Have you heard what your relations have alleged against you as matter of complaint?' asked the mayor.

'I wish I had not been *obliged* to hear it,' answered the good man, coughing in order to hide his tears; 'but I know they will be sorry for what they have said, and so I shall gladly forget everything. Unmerited calumny is more easily forgiven than that which is merited; and if there still should remain in the heart of a father and a citizen, like myself, some remembrance of the pain I have felt, it will be caused only by the regret that a fifty years' life of simplicity, honesty in my calling, piety towards God, and love for my wife and children, have not been sufficient surety for my honest intentions and my sane state of mind. But now, gentlemen, as the time has arrived, I will tell you honestly what I had in my head, and what gave rise to so much misunderstanding. It is not unknown to you, gentlemen, that from my youth forward I have ever industriously pursued the wonderful and beautiful science of mechanics. When on my travels for the purpose of improvement, I made acquaintance, in Florence, with the clever silversmith, Jessada, and learned many secrets from him which were of great advantage to me in my handiwork; and I have always been friendly with him to this day. When, some years after this, I had settled myself down, and taken a wife, and had become the father of a family, and in the struggles of everyday life had forgotten all about Italy, the said Jessada appeared suddenly in this town, and came to my house, and told me that he came to make a proposal to me. He related to me that, in his native town, there was a certain very wise and clever man, to whom it had occurred to invent a kind of

machine which should shew the time, like a clock, only of so small a size that any person could carry it in his pocket, and always have it with him, without any inconvenience whatever. The man, he said, had made some of these chronometers, and had then died; but very few of them had been distributed, because the price was so enormous. Jessada, being in possession of this work of art, determined to bring the invention into Germany; thinking Nuremberg the most likely place, and I the most likely handicraftsman to carry out his design. Being desirous of leaving to these children, two of whom have represented me as insane' (here the poor man's voice was lost in distress and tears)—'being desirous of leaving them a respectable fortune, and of rendering a service to mankind, I hastily accepted the proposal of the Florentine; and after having examined the little portable clock as much as was possible without injuring it, I offered, with good courage, and a lively faith in God's help, to imitate the invention, and to improve it where it might be necessary. We then came to the following agreement: I was to set to work, and Jessada was, in the meantime, to travel through Germany, Holland, France, and England, with his little clock, and seek for customers, and then he was to return in a year for the clocks I should have made, and supply his customers with them. It was a thoughtless agreement on my part! The time flew away faster than I expected, and my doubts as to whether I should be able to keep my promise increased from day to day, and with my doubts my anxiety increased tenfold. The stated time drew nearer and nearer to a close, and nothing was yet done. My secret trouble of mind might reasonably make me seem disagreeable, and to all appearance half-crazy; and the tormenting spirit, the artifice, and the

reproaches of my family, nearly drove me mad in reality.'

The poor old man here stopped to breathe more freely and relieve the oppression at his heart. His daughter threw her arms affectionately and comfortingly round him, in recognition of which he stroked her forehead and cheeks with his hand, while the wife hid her face in her handkerchief and sobbed, and the sons knew not which way to look for shame.

'Give this good man a chair that he may rest himself,' said the mayor. The councilmen murmured among themselves, some expressing pity, some wonder.

After a short interruption, quiet was restored; Peter Hele again rose, and with a cheerful and composed, but thoughtful countenance, proceeded as follows:

'It may perhaps be asked, why I opened my heart to nobody during so long a time, not even to my own family? To this I must answer—and to the praise of our native town be it said—that there are thousands and thousands of cleverer men than I in Nuremberg, and that one single word to one of these would have been sufficient to discover my secret, and, as the saying goes, to drive the goats into another pen. I was therefore obliged to be silent amongst my neighbours and friends, and it was not the less necessary to be silent with my wife, for women's ears are ever open, and their tongues never still. I was equally obliged to keep everything from my sons, for neither of them has a shadow of taste or talent for mechanics or mathematics, and they would never have been able to understand what I was about. When I had completed my undertaking, therefore, it would be time to make them useful assistants in my work; and the fame was sure to remain to them an almost certain inheritance, for posterity readily gives up those who are gone for those who are

present. You see, gentlemen, how necessary it was for me to keep my secret; so do not seek an evidence of madness in my obstinate mysteriousness, or in the act of my leaving my daughter's house and getting into prison. The inquisitive tailor destroyed the little clock I had just put together. I found the work of many toilsome days and nights in atoms. What was there any longer to hope in a house like this? Like the first recluses in a desert, I put myself into a little cell. There—God's name be praised!—an invisible angel assisted me with its power, and not only enabled me to renew what the tailor had destroyed, but to make further improvements in my work. In short, gentlemen, my confident hope has not been disappointed, and God has permitted me to complete my design, and Jessada may come as soon as he pleases. The time-keeper is ready; and whilst that invented by the Florentine goes only twelve hours, and is then down, mine continues to go and to strike forty hours without any trouble.'

Hele put his hand into his breast, and pulled out the little so-called 'Nuremberg Egg,' the first of the name. All eyes were fixed in astonishment on the little masterpiece of science, which at that moment, in clear and delicate strokes, struck the hour of noon, and, like the wood-worm, constantly ticking, accompanied the time as it flew. The councilmen sprang from their seats; the inventor of the wonderful piece of art was admitted upon the bench.

'Do not lavish your praises, gentlemen,' cried the old man, animated with enthusiasm and delight, 'on what I have imperfectly performed, but rather let me thank Heaven, that by a devout contemplation of the works of the great Creator I have been enabled to perform it at all. As I was making this living egg, I considered in my own

mind that origin of all being—that invisible thing without which we could not exist—namely, Time. The wise Florentine, and I, in imitation of him, have taken the hours prisoner. In a little while, every man will be lord and master of time, and will be able to calculate when the sun and moon change places, when the planets rise and set, and how the mysterious zodiac rules the course of our globe. The clock will be to every man as a conscience which points out to him the lost, the gained, or the well-employed hours. It will be the comfort of every one, for it will enable us to count the fleeting moments of happiness, and with fortitude to reckon the heavy-winged hours of misfortune, which, though they appear to us to be stationary, pass on, through God's mercy, like the rest. Upon this time-keeper, the sufferer can calculate the period of his recovery, the prisoner the hour of his release, and the dying the hour of his admission into Paradise. The priest will not forget the hour of prayer, nor the judge the hour which calls him to his duty; and the many cruel moments of suspense experienced by one accused, when awaiting the judgment'—— Here the unanimous voices of the council interrupted Peter Hele.

'Go forth, noble old man,' cried they, 'an ornament as you are to our excellent town! Go to your own home attended by the praises and blessings of your townsmen, and long may you live to the profit and honour of the place which gave you birth. Were you not so kind a father, we would open the doors of your prison to receive those who would have sent you to a madhouse; but for your sake they shall be forgiven, and left to their own shame for punishment.'

The ingenious and talented artificer was accompanied to his own home like a victor. The sons of Peter Hele felt only the paltry regret of the vanquished, and simply

reproached themselves for having considerably postponed, through their own fault, the profits of a lucrative speculation. The father forgave them from his heart, but the sons loved him no better than before, although they inherited, as he had said, the fame of his invention. Posterity has always regarded the younger Peter Hele as the inventor of the watch.

The municipal council retained the little machine of Peter Hele in their own hands until the expiration of the forty hours. Young and old thronged to behold the little wonder, but it was with this as with everything else in the world: some whispered something about enchantment, and others of direct agency by the good angels of the inventor. Consequential people turned up their noses, and said they had already seen such quackery in Venice and Bologna; and pretended connoisseurs criticised and found fault, and declared they could themselves have made something better. Business-people, who are so careful of their hours, praised the new invention from their hearts; but the ladies, who are no observers of time, railed loudly against its faithful guardian. The majority united at length in the opinion, that it was a pity that watches had not been sooner invented. The invention could, said they, be but the work of a day—it was mere child's play—nothing could be more natural or more simple. The Nuremberg 'living egg' shared exactly the fate of the egg of Columbus.

The reader may not perhaps know that the first watches are supposed to have been made in the form of an egg.

# THE ARTIST'S FIRST WORK.

NOT far from the splendid Palazza Falliero at Possagno, in the Venetian States, stood the humble cabin of an aged mason named Pasino. One evening when, wearied with his work, he lay sleeping soundly after the labours of the day, he was suddenly awakened by a loud knock at the door of his cabin. He rose, ran hastily to open it, and notwithstanding the darkness of the night, perceived that it was a little boy who stood without.

'Who are you, and what do you want here?' brusquely inquired Pasino.

'Antonio,' replied the timid voice of a child.

'What Antonio?'

'Your own Antonio, dear grandpapa.'

'Is it thou, my child? And what has happened then?' said the mason, quickly changing his tone, and drawing the little fellow kindly towards him, whilst he sought even by the faint light of the moon to read in his countenance what unexpected cause could have occasioned this late visit. 'But speak then, my child! Why hast left thy mother?—Is she ill?—Hast displeased her?—Has she turned you out-of-doors?'

'No; I left home of my own accord.'

'And for what reason?' again inquired the old man, as he led the child into his cabin, and struck a light. 'Tell me now! why did you leave your mother?' Pasino had now succeeded in lighting a lantern, and was able more plainly to examine his grandson's countenance. He then perceived that the child was in tears, and carried a small bundle slung on the point of a stick over his shoulder.

'I could not stay any longer at home,' said the boy, as he threw his little packet on the floor. 'I was no longer master there; some one else had everything his own way. Oh what a country boor that Venetian is! If I were only ten years older, I would turn him out of the house. Alas! why am I only eleven years old?'

'And a pretty rogue you are,' said the grandfather, laughing at the childish passion of Antonio. 'So you want to be master in your mother's house?'

'When my father died, he left no other son: I am therefore the head of the house.'

'A fine house truly!' replied the old man, who was by this time thoroughly awakened from his slumbers: 'four stakes, a few stones, and a little straw! If it were a palace indeed, like that of Falliero, it would be something worth talking of.'

'Falliero!—Falliero!' said the child, as he shook his little head in a determined manner; 'one may have spirit without belonging to the rich house of Falliero.'

'Tell me, Antonio, will you have some supper?' interrupted the old man.

'No; I am not hungry.'

'But you have had a long way to walk from your mother's.'

'Only three miles: what is that?'

'Well, then, give me an account of your escape from home.'

'Yes, grandpapa, this is the history of it. You know that my mother contracted a second marriage with that low fellow Paesillo; and what annoyed me most about it was, that she changed her pretty name. Was it not a beautiful name, grandpapa?'

'Yes, to be sure. Well, go on.'

'And it was my own name besides; and I think it a disgrace that a son should bear one name and his mother another.'

'Yes, yes; but do finish your story, for I am going to sleep,' interrupted Pasino, drowsily turning into bed

'The Signor Paesillo had hardly set foot within our house,' continued Antonio, 'when changes began to be made. In the first place, I was not caressed as heretofore; I was no longer given the best of everything—it was all for Signor Paesillo. I was unhappy, and they left me to myself: I complained, and they left me to complain; and no one said: "What aileth thee, little one? Come to dinner—come to supper:" so I would not eat either one or the other. I took my resolution, and said to myself: "There is my grandfather, who lives alone, who loves children, who will let me do as I please if I go and live with him. *There* I will go; and there, if nowhere else, I shall be master." Are you gone to sleep, grandpapa, instead of listening?'

'No, no; all right! Now lie down on this fresh straw. Since you like so much to be master, I will soon make you a master—mason.'

'Oh, a mason is not the nicest trade.'

'You'll see what a nice one it is.'

'What! putting one stone on the top of another?—always stones!'

'Is it marble, then, you would wish for, you little madcap?'

'Certainly that would be better, and more honourable too.'

'Well, then, stop chattering now, and let me go to sleep.'

The next day Pasino woke Antonio early, and after having offered up together a short prayer and partaken of a frugal breakfast, they wended their way to the Falliero palace, where the mason had been working for some days past. But it was all in vain that he attempted to keep his grandchild at work, for the little fellow was always mixing up mud or squaring stones. The old man could never turn his back for a moment, but Antonio was busy making either a Venus or a Policinello, or preparing clay with his trowel for the divers figures he wished to fashion. And if Pasino scolded him, he would say: 'But you see, grandpapa, I am so tired!'

'But what are you doing now?'

'Making a blessed Virgin and Child.'

And the poor grandfather, who for the most part could discover nothing but a shapeless mass of clay, rather than disappoint the boy, would praise the beauty of the Virgin, or the grace of the Child, and prophesied that his 'little man' would one day become a famous mason, and even build palaces for the Fallieri themselves.

On the approach of the feast of St Cecilia, the Duke of Falliero gave orders that a grand banquet should be prepared in honour of the festival. Antonio, who had glided in amongst the cooks and assistants, opened his eyes wide, and went about admiring and smelling all these fine things, of which he had never before even formed an idea.

All on a sudden, and just as dinner was about to be served, the major-domo uttered a loud cry, and striking his forehead with his hand, as if in despair, exclaimed: 'Oh, unhappy creature that I am!—oh, unfortunate Pietro!—Madonna Santissima! I am ruined, and with me the illustrious House of Falliero!' At this moment, while the poor man was finishing his doleful soliloquy, the duke himself happened to pass, and inquired what was the matter. 'Oh, illustrious duke,' replied the major-domo, 'beat me, kill me if you will; I am a wretch, an assassin!'

The duke cut him short with the inquiry: 'Well, but explain yourself, Pietro: how is it that my honour has been compromised as well as yours? Speak, and let me understand it.'

'My banquet, may it please your excellency, which would have equalled those that were spread before the doges of Venice in the times of its greatest splendour—oh, my magnificent banquet is ruined by an act of forgetfulness, which deserves to be punished by a halter.'

'And what, then, have you forgotten?'

'The first service, my lord, is perfect—everything is composed in the most exquisite taste, the purest and most elegant style; the second corresponds to the first in every respect; the third, if possible, exceeds them both; but the fourth—the dessert—oh, Madonna Santissima! only think of the centre dish being spoiled—the very crowning piece of the whole!'

'What a piece of work about nothing!' exclaimed the little Antonio with an arch smile, as he stood in the corner of the kitchen: 'it is only to make another dish instead.'

'And *can* there not be another substituted?' inquired the duke.

'It is difficult—it is impossible, may it please your excellency.'

'Make some pyramid, some tower of—of something.'

'It is exactly this *something* which we are in want of; and besides, there is no time left—there is only half an hour to spare, and already the guests are beginning to arrive.'

'I should know very well what to do,' muttered Antonio to himself, 'if they would only ask my advice.'

'Well,' said the duke somewhat anxiously to Pietro, 'what course do you mean to pursue?'

'Oh, if the architecture of the banquet were not of so pure and elegant a style, we could—— But no, it would ruin our reputation.'

'The architecture, do you say? Well, go hold a consultation with Pasino the mason—he may be able to help you out of the scrape. You are laughing at the idea?'

'You, Antonio, what are you whispering about over there? Go, run and call your grandfather, and tell him to come here.'

Antonio, highly amused, darted off directly, and soon came back pulling the old man along by his white apron. When the latter had been made to understand what was the matter, he shook his head, and twisting his cotton cap (which he had taken off out of respect to the duke) in his thin hand, said: 'If you wanted me now to build up a wall, or repair the capital of a pillar, or'——

'But it is to make a centre dish which is required, grandpapa,' cried Antonio, as if he were speaking to a deaf man.

'I know it,' answered Pasino.

'And cannot you, who build houses and palaces, make a simple dish?'

'Hold thy tongue, boy, and do not talk so loud before monseigneur.'

Antonio, somewhat confused at the rebuke, began to murmur impatiently: 'If they would only listen to me!'

The Duke Falliero, who had for some time admired the arch vivacity of Antonio's countenance, was struck with its expression at this moment. It bespoke contempt for so puerile a discussion; and the child's forehead was radiant with a consciousness of power. A half-malicious smile played around his mouth, while the two rosy lips, half parted, seemed so plainly about to say: 'Why do you not seek my help?' that the duke could not resist interrogating him.

'If we *were* to listen to you, then, what would be your counsel?' said the duke, as he playfully pulled Antonio by the ear.

'Why, my lord,' answered the boy, colouring up to his eyes on being thus addressed, 'if the Signor Pietro would only give me a bit of paste, such as is used for making ornamental cakes'——

'Do not listen to this little pickle, please your excellency!' said Pasino, at the same time motioning to the child to be silent.

'I will not only listen to him,' said the duke, 'but also desire Pietro to leave the construction of this famous dish to Antonio.—Antonio, I leave the matter entirely with you; but on your part, what will you give me if you do not succeed?'

'My ears, please your excellency,' replied the boy.

'Done, then,' said the duke: 'let us see what you can achieve.'

The banquet was sumptuous beyond any that the guests had ever beheld; and when the dessert was about to be served, the duke entertained the company

by relating to them the history of the cook's failure, and of the opportune presumption of the little Antonio. As he spoke, the dessert made its appearance. Dish after dish was laid in exact order upon the table; but whether it arose from malice, or whether the poor Antonio had not been able to succeed, the centre of the table remained vacant, and the guests began to smile, and then to wonder, until at last their patience was well-nigh exhausted, when lo! the major-domo appeared, bearing in his hands a large dish, veiled by a light covering. It was laid before the duke, its covering removed, and a cry of admiration resounded through the hall. It was a beautiful lion, exquisitely modelled in sugared paste.

'Bravo!—bravo!' exclaimed the guests on all sides. 'Where is the confectioner, the cook, the little architect?'

'Where is the *artist?*' inquired the duke.

Then appeared, half concealed behind Pietro, a handsome boy, blushing and confused, but with a countenance wonderfully expressive of genius for one of such tender years. The duke perceiving in the boy the marks of decided talent, requested permission of his grandfather to take him to Venice, where he placed him under the direction of the most distinguished masters; and four years later, the young Canova—for such was the lad's name—was on his way to Rome with letters of recommendation to some of the most illustrious families in that capital.

Canova became the most distinguished sculptor of his day, but was always the first to relate his early history to those who went to visit him in his studio.

# THE DEAF MUSICIAN.

IT was the 20th of March 1827. In the poorly-furnished apartment of a small house in Baden in Austria, an old man was making preparations for a journey. He hastily folded within a knapsack a few changes of linen. The weather was cold, the windows were covered with hoarfrost, and yet only a few dying embers burned upon the hearth. Either the old man's mind was too deeply engrossed to think of feeding the flame, or perhaps his scanty resources needed careful husbanding to meet the expenses of his approaching journey.

In truth, the aspect of the room bespoke a state of want rather than of affluence. A bed with curtains of faded green serge, a few antique arm-chairs of varnished wood, covered with well-worn tapestry, a walnut table, and a harpsichord, composed its entire furniture. The harpsichord was strewed with music, partly in manuscript; and a flying sheet covered with nearly illegible notes, and disfigured by numerous erasures, shewed what had been the old man's recent employment. The occupier of this desolate abode was between fifty and sixty years of age. His lofty forehead, encircled by locks of silver gray, beamed with intelligence, although he

appeared bowed down beneath the weight of some great affliction. A dark fire kindled in his hazel eyes, and his cheeks, glowing with one bright feverish spot of hectic colour, contrasted strangely with the deadly paleness which overspread the rest of his countenance. When the knapsack was made up, the old man approached the table, on which lay an open letter, stamped with the Vienna post-mark. He took it up, and stood awhile with his eyes fixed on its contents, though it only contained these few words :

'My dear Uncle—Pardon me the grief which I am occasioning you ; but implicated in an unhappy transaction, I have just received an order to quit Vienna, whence I am commanded for the future to absent myself. I beseech you to come to my aid : you alone can save me. Adieu. John.'

This letter came from a nephew whom he had brought up, and whose disorderly conduct had rendered necessary the rigorous mandate which now banished him from the capital.

When the old man had perused it once more, he appeared confirmed in his resolution, and with his knapsack in one hand, and his walking-stick in the other, he prepared to set out. But on reaching the threshold, he turned back, and casting a look of deep regret on this modest asylum, where he had long and happily dwelt, he sighed ; then, as if attracted by a magic charm, he returned to his harpsichord, and quickly laying down what he held in his hands, he ran his fingers over the discoloured notes of the instrument. His gloomy and dejected countenance was gradually lighted up with an expression of intense happiness, and a sublime strain ascended towards heaven, a fitting hymn of praise to the Almighty.

As he plunged into these regions of harmony, it seemed as if his spirit had bid adieu to earth, and soared to the realms above in search of consolation. But soon all was again silent; the old man wept; he heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed: 'And to think that I can hear nothing!' Alas! he was deaf.

The poor pilgrim again took up his staff, and set forth on his journey. At the turning of the street, he once more looked round on the humble dwelling where he had passed the last ten years of his life, shut out by his infirmity from the sounds of the external world. Music for *him* only existed *within* the soul. He walked on into the country; for, by way of husbanding his small store he was going on foot from Baden to Vienna. The evening closed in: the old man stopped before a peasant's cottage. He had presumed too much on his strength, having expected, before night closed in, to reach Vienna, from which the village of Baden is only ten leagues distant. He had walked vigorously, but night approached and he felt his strength failing him. He knocked at the door; a young girl opened it, asking him what he wanted. The old man, who guessed her question from the movement of her lips, replied: 'Hospitality, my good girl.' 'Come in then: there is always a welcome at my father's hearth for the benighted traveller.' Thus cordially invited, he entered a large room, where the frugal evening repast was smoking upon a homely table. A cover was quickly laid for him near the father of the family, and he sat down to table with the friendly household group. After supper, he seated himself in an old leathern arm-chair by the chimney corner: a cheerful fire blazed upon the hearth. The mother and daughter cleared the table, whilst the father opened an old harpsichord, and the three sons took down their instruments which hung against the

wall. They consisted of an alto, a violoncello, and a hautboy.

The performers attuned their instruments, the mother and daughter seated themselves with their work near the fire, where a single lamp afforded the needful light. The father gave the signal, and the four musicians began a piece with that *ensemble,* with that knowledge of measure, which the Germans possess beyond all other nations. By degrees their eyes kindled, divers emotions were depicted on their countenances, they abandoned themselves to the ardour of the sentiment with which they were transported. The two women listened whilst they almost held in their breath. Their work fell from their hands. The music ceased—they exchanged looks of delight—the young girl kissed her father's gray hairs with emotion : they forgot the presence of their guest. He had followed all their movements with a longing eye, for his deafness prevented his hearing a single note of the music which had so deeply affected them.

'O how happy you are,' he said with a faltering voice, 'to be able to enjoy this delicious pleasure! Alas! it is long since *I* have been able to hear either the human voice, or music, which is the voice of God. When I go out to meditate in the forest, I *feel* indeed the wind which blows around me, but I *hear* not its mighty voice, whilst it shakes the trees, or murmurs among the leaves, mingling with the general harmony of nature. When I return from my walk at the close of a fine summer's day, I can indeed see the young shepherdess as she leads her flock to be watered at the fountain, but I cannot hear either her joyous song or the tinkling sound of the sheep-bells. I can see the lark fly swiftly to the valley where her nest lies hidden, but I hear not her melodious voice mingling with the whisper of the breeze. Oh, music! harmony!

it is my life; but, alas! its *vocal* expression is lost to me for ever. Let me, I pray you, read the pages which have so deeply stirred you.' He rose, took the sheet in his hand, a sudden paleness overspread his features; he sunk upon his seat overwhelmed with emotion.

He had just read upon the cover, 'Allegretto, from the Pastoral Symphony of Beethoven.' All gathered around him, and inquired the cause of his agitation. When he was able at length to command his voice, he arose from his seat and said: '*I am Beethoven!*' At the sound of this name the father lifted his woollen cap from his head, and the sons bowed with the deepest reverence. Beethoven pressed their hands in his, and wept for joy. The good peasants kissed these venerated hands; for this man they felt was the genius who had lightened for them the daily burden of life—the genius so honoured in Vienna, that when he took his daily walk, the passers-by exclaimed: 'There is Beethoven!' and silently made way for him, lest they should interrupt his meditations. The peasants looked with unwearied delight on that noble brow where grief had indeed stamped its fatal marks, but which still was encircled with the halo of genius.

Beethoven then seated himself at the harpsichord, and desiring the young people to take up their instruments, he played for them his own symphony. It was a moment of unspeakable happiness.

When they had finished, Beethoven *improvisēd* sublime melodies: his spirit, breaking through the bonds which enchained him on earth, seemed to rise triumphantly towards heaven.

The poor harpsichord under his hand gave forth unwonted sounds—sometimes majestic as the voice of thunder, sometimes mysterious as the sighs of the dying.

Alas! it was the song of the swan! A part of the

night thus glided on. The bed usually occupied by the father of the family was prepared for Beethoven, and he was constrained to accept it.

During the night he became feverish, and to cool his burning brow, he arose and went out into the open air too slightly clad. The air was bitterly cold: the wind groaned in the branches of the trees, and penetrating rain drifted over the country. When the old man returned, he was benumbed. The dropsy from which he had long suffered mounted to his chest, and too soon it became apparent that all remedies were useless. He was with difficulty transported to Vienna, where he was visited by a physician, who pronounced his case a hopeless one. Hummel, his dearest and truest friend, heard of his danger, and flew to attend him in his last moments; but he was almost insensible. The words he sought to utter expired on his pallid lips. Still he recognised his early friend, and thanked him with a mournful smile. Hummel pressed the icy-cold hand within his own with deep emotion.

When the dying man felt the pressure, his glazed eye kindled with a momentary consciousness.

He sunk back upon the pillow. With a gentle sigh the spirit had fled!

THE END.

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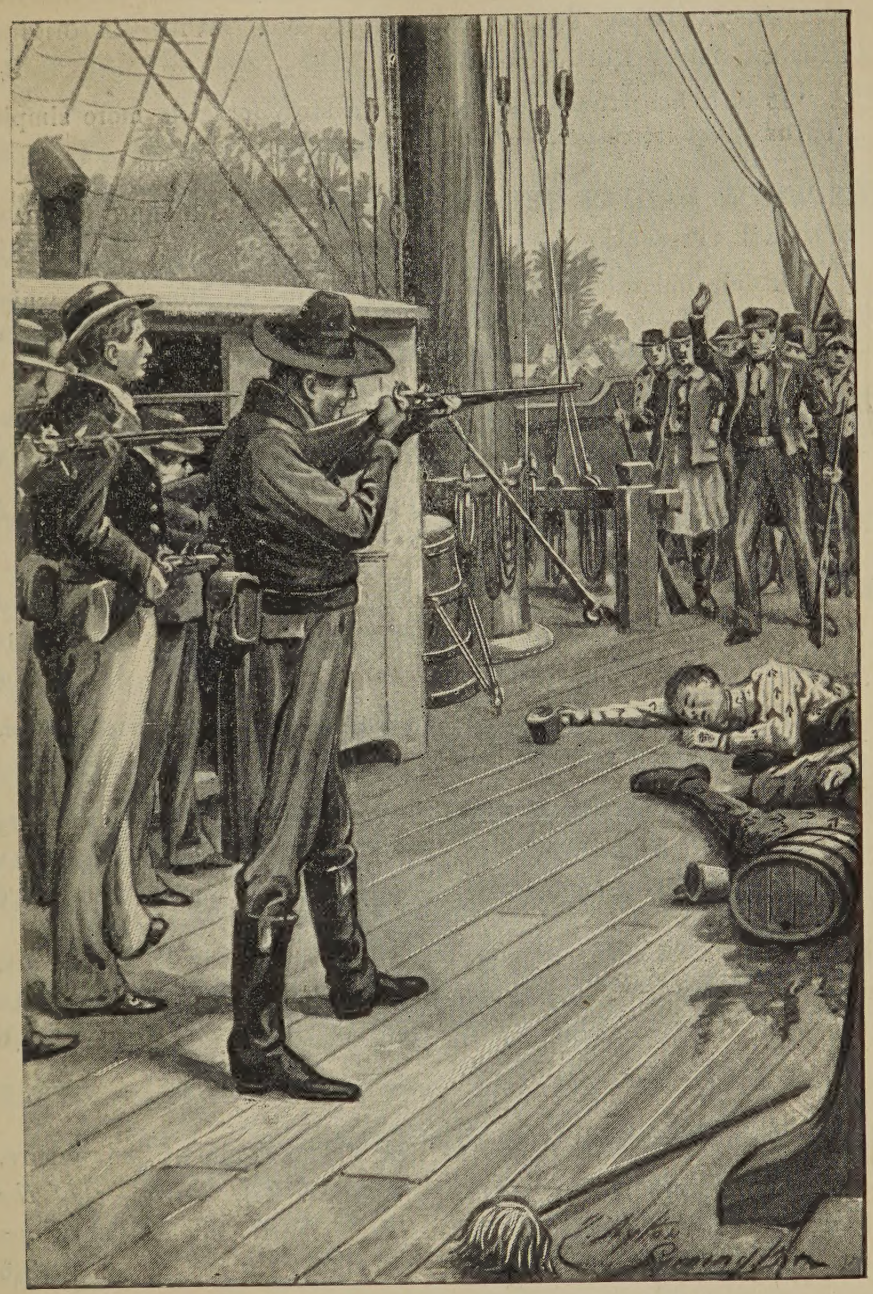

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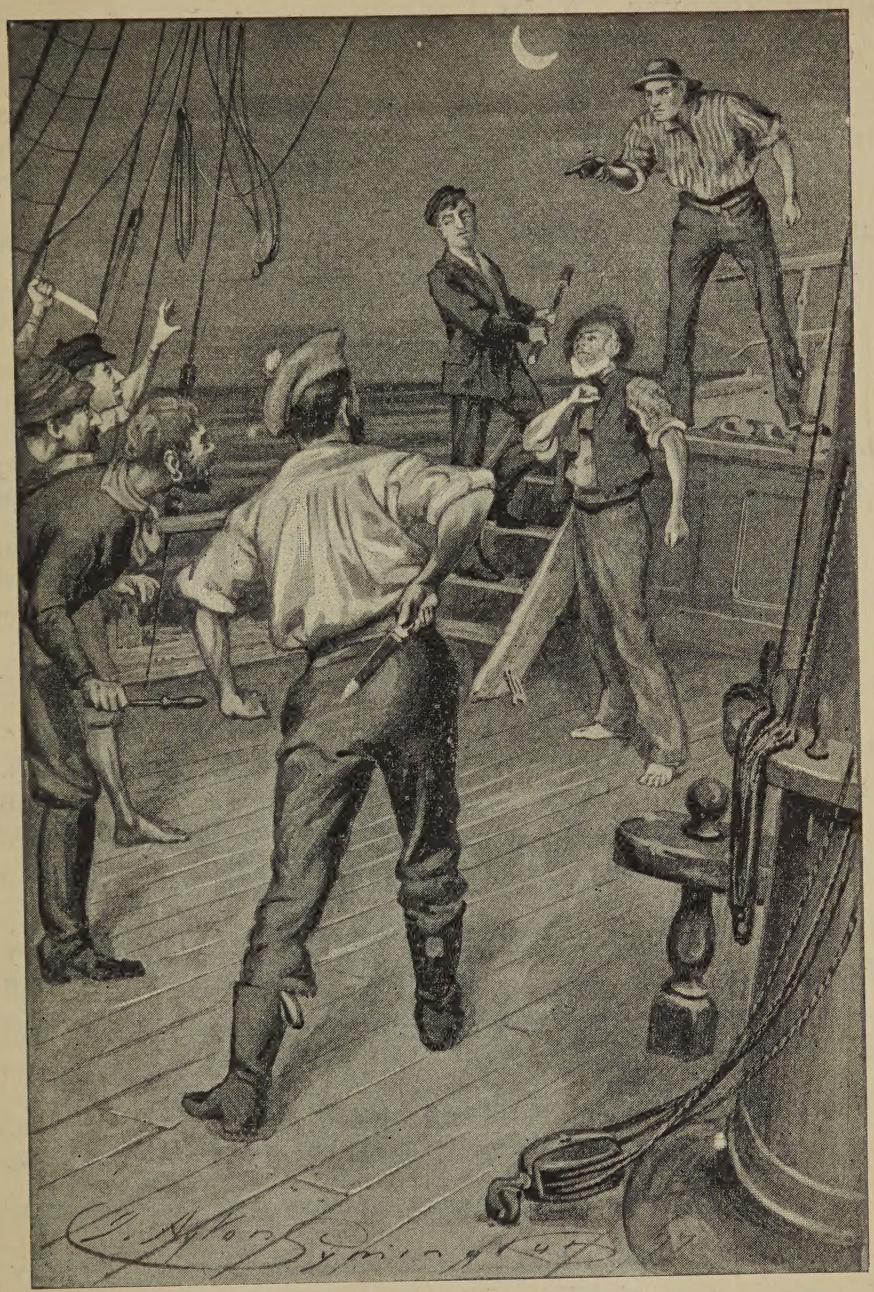

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